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Gregorio Piaia

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Models of the History of Philosophy

Volume IV: The Hegelian Age



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Volume 235

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Giovanni Santinello
Editors

Models of the History of Philosophy

Volume IV: The Hegelian Age

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Preface

From the age of Kant to the age of Hegel: we resume the analysis from the point where we left it at the end of volume III, namely, from the historiographical outcomes of the ‘Kantian Turning-Point’ (see *Models*, III, pp. 697 ff.). Indeed, the histories of philosophy produced in the German-speaking area between the last years of the eighteenth century and the first 40 years of the new century – although Ritter’s vast work extends beyond, i.e. as far as 1853 – can be considered as a *continuum*, which, however, consists of a variety of theoretical positions and lines of interpretation. Common to all authors is a strong theoretical intent, namely their concern for determining the ‘concept’ of the history of philosophy, viewed in itself and in its relation to philosophy as a ‘science’. As Hegel observes in a famous page of his *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, this concept seems, at first glance, contradictory because philosophy is directed toward what is immutable and eternal (truth), whereas history places itself in the dimension of what is changeable and becoming. And when Schleiermacher situates the historico-philosophical work below the ‘supreme domain of general speculation’ and beside ‘the space proper to natural sciences or to historical sciences’, he also recognises that the ‘peculiar domain’ of historiography ‘looks like a thin border separating two fields, on which [...] one cannot stop without slipping either on one side or on the other’. The perspective of a history of philosophy conceived *a priori*, typical of the Kantians and particularly of Tennemann, thus yields place to the Hegelian identification of philosophy and the history of philosophy, which is conceived of as the self-manifestation of Reason (i.e. of the Absolute) viewed as the ‘Spirit of the World’.

In other terms: the Kantian “transcendental”, interpreted in a psychological sense, is replaced by a renewed metaphysical-theological perspective, in which the coincidence of the logical deduction of the categories of absolute thought and the historical sequence of the systems of philosophy is guaranteed by the rule of dialectic, which is capable of making the historical ‘concrete facts’ understandable and imparting to the ‘development’ (*Entwicklung*) of history a character of systematic unity as well as a specific meaning and a direction. From this perspective, the history of philosophy emerges sublimated and transfigured but also dissolved, since it has been deprived of the character of autonomous discipline which it had acquired

after its modern rebirth and which had also been encouraged by seventeenth-century erudition and by the eighteenth-century notion of 'critical' history. So, we are faced with a paradoxical outcome: precisely when the 'philosophical claim' in writing the history of philosophy which had been repeatedly advocated from Leibniz onwards finds with Hegel its supreme and complete fulfilment, philosophical historiography risks losing its distinctiveness and solidity.

Within this, more than chronological, thematic span there unfolds a rich and highly significant historiographical production: it is a sort of ultimate apotheosis of the 'general' history of philosophy that takes place at the very moment when the development of 'epochal' histories (i.e. devoted to a single age of philosophy) and then of monographic studies results in a withdrawal of this literary genre from the forefront of scientific investigation to areas increasingly retreating behind the lines, with the production of works which summarise and systematise the results obtained by sectional studies devoted to individual periods and authors. It is therefore not by chance that the chapter on Hegel closes preannouncing Eduard Zeller's vast specialist work entitled *Die Philosophie der Griechen*.

In this context, a theoretical and methodological counterpoint to Hegel is represented by authors like Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, Schleiermacher, Boeckh, Brandis, and Ritter, as well as by Schelling's followers. They represent Romantic thought strictly speaking, which is commonly regarded as a literary rather than a speculative production, in comparison with Hegel's rigorous and systematic absolute idealism. In fact, it is to these Romantics that we owe historiographical categories and models which form alternatives to Hegelianism, although they partake in the same cultural climate. This Romanticism, however, should not be considered as a unitary movement, since it is not possible to define a univocal 'Romantic view' of the history of philosophy. Indeed, in Schleiermacher, the claiming of the primacy of history over philosophy, far from falling into pure empirics, is accompanied by the elaboration of a hermeneutical doctrine understood as a general 'technical' discipline connected to language and to the history of man, and therefore capable of contributing – as will become clear in Dilthey – to the 'foundation of the sciences of spirit'. As the 'art of understanding', hermeneutics presents itself as a *medium* between rhetoric and dialectics. On the one hand, it relates philosophy to literature and art; on the other hand, it accords philosophical importance to philology and, through the latter, to historiography; here we have that circular relationship between philosophy and the history of philosophy which constitutes the conceptual plexus underpinning the development of theoretical reflection up to the present day. In the light of these premises, the historiographical works written by Schleiermacher and his followers do not appear to be dilettantish philosophy at all, as Hegel had criticised; rather, they overturn the Hegelian perspective, making the historico-philosophical reconstruction into an endlessly open work which, thanks to its qualities of immediacy, 'congeniality', and 'philosophising together' (*Synphilosophieren*), acquires a distinctive dialectical significance that reveals a much greater concreteness than the Hegelian one.

As concerns Schelling and those historians of philosophy who, in different ways, were influenced by him (Steck, Ast, Rixner, Windischmann, Röth, and Posselt),

they start from the idea of 'totality', whose principle lies in the soul or in life itself, understood as a unity of nature and spirit, and from the idea – closely related to that of totality – of 'organism', which is opposed to that of 'system' and requires an act of 'intellectual intuition' superior to the discursive progression of the pure intellect. This results in a scheme of historical interpretation that pivots around the concept of 'decline', i.e. of a development in a negative sense, which is considered as a departure from the original mystical unity of spirit and nature, experience and thought. So we come to a rediscovery of the remotest mythological thought, of the 'original philosophy', of 'Orientalism', which involves a reversal of direction with respect to the Hellenic-centred and 'Western' line of interpretation which had established itself and had increasingly intensified from Brucker and Meiners to Tiedemann, Buhle and Tennemann, up to the exaltation of the 'Greek miracle' in Hegel.

However, in the first half of the nineteenth century, philosophical historiography does not only speak German. On this side of the Rhine, Degérando and then Cousin create a general history of philosophy that departs from the eighteenth-century pattern of the *histoire de l'esprit humain*, although it revolves around a wholly French tradition, whose cornerstones are Descartes but also Montaigne, Gassendi, and Condillac. A central position accorded to the gnosiological problem and to the 'nomenclature' of systems (modelled on the classificatory method in use in natural history) and a 'reconciliation' between opposite speculative positions, in the spirit of a renewed eclecticism: it is on these bases that Degérando intends to justify on a theoretical plane a history of philosophy which is at the same time general and systematic and is conceived as an 'essay of experimental philosophy', inspired by a 'philosophy of experience' which, unlike sensationalism, is open to the spiritual dimension too.

Cousin, in turn, takes up and strengthens the classificatory approach adopted by Degérando and the Kantians, making it even more definite and compelling, so that the typological scheme, derived from the human structure of knowledge, is systematically applied and verified with reference to the various historical periods. This correspondence between psychology and history follows in the wake of the 'psychological' and 'conscientialist' tradition of French thought, but also marks the end of the contrast (in the cases of Descartes and Malebranche) or mistrust (in the case of Condillac) existing between history and philosophy. This means a decisive turning point which fully rehabilitates the historical perspective and which takes place thanks to the contacts between Cousin and German idealism and to the transposition to this side of the Rhine of some fundamental themes, starting from the philosophy of history. In Cousin, the history of philosophy thus becomes the confirming proof of the development of human consciousness and of its faculties. But such an alliance, although under the disguise of the eclectic aspiration, cannot conceal the underlying conflict between a Hegelian-oriented conception, markedly evolutive and progressive, and a psychological-aprioristic construction always tending to lead the historical course of thought back within a fixed and recurring scheme.

Cousin's eclecticism had a strong influence south of the Alps, before being superseded by Hegelianism. Two distinguishing aspects characterise Italian philosophical historiography in the first half of the nineteenth century. First of all, it

pursues the aim of reconstructing a thoroughly Italian speculative tradition (a sort of ‘national path’ to philosophy in connection with the political events of the Risorgimento), whose distinctive and most significant moments, through time, are the ‘most ancient wisdom’ of the Pythagoreans, the ‘philosophy of experience’, the Fathers of the Western Church, the eminent Doctors of Scholasticism, the intellectual magnificence of the Renaissance, the great and isolated figure of G.B. Vico. This purpose is correlated with the need of elaborating an autonomous speculative line, characterised by theoretical balance and by the refusal of any radical opposition between reason and faith: hence a critical confrontation established with the latest French (sensualism, eclecticism) and German (Kant, then the ‘pantheists’) manifestations of thought. The translations into Italian of some German and French general histories of philosophy therefore acquire great significance, since they pave the way for a more autonomous historiographical activity which found its fulfilment in Modena’s and Poli’s *Supplimenti*, in Galluppi’s comparative analyses, in Rosmini’s rigorously speculative method, and in the controversial but challenging interpretations proposed by Gioberti.

Looking now at the other side of the English Channel, it may be observed that, in the first half of the nineteenth century, English-speaking philosophical historiography was characterised by a ‘delay’ with respect to continental historiography, a lag which was made up for during the second half of the century especially thanks to some translations from the German which were carried out by exponents of neo-idealism and were intended to meet specific teaching needs. Wishing to keep in view this situation and in order to avoid artificial subdivisions, we have considered it appropriate to widen the time span of the chapter on British historiography extending it to the whole nineteenth century. The delay of this historiography is essentially due to a lesser historical sensitivity typical of the English empiricist tradition: it is not by chance that, in the 1830s and 1840s, the English authors who appear to be more interested in the history of philosophy (e.g. Coleridge and his followers, among whom Maurice is particularly outstanding) are those more receptive to German idealism or more sensitive to philosophical-religious themes, which, on the other side of the Channel, had been widely welcomed by idealism and spiritualism. But even an openly positivistic history of philosophy like that written by Lewes (1845–1846), which enjoyed considerable success, derives its idea of a unitary and systematic development precisely from a direct contact with the Hegelian perspective, although, in the author’s view, this progression culminates in Comte rather than in Hegel.

The English edition of the *Storia delle storie generali della filosofia* (Brescia, Padua, and Rome, 1979–2004, 5 vols in 7 tomes) therefore continues with this fourth volume. Before its translation, the original text was revised and corrected, and the bibliography was thoroughly updated. The presentations of the authors systematically treated in this volume follow (except for Hegel and the British authors) the pattern already adopted in the previous volumes of *Models*:

1. Chapter number

1.1. Number of the author within the chapter

1.1.1. Biography of the author

1.1.2. List of their works

1.1.3. Presentation of their concept of the history of philosophy

1.1.4. Analysis of his historiographical work(s)

1.1.4.1. Presentation of the structure of the work(s)

1.1.4.2. Periodization proposed within the work(s)

1.1.4.3. Historiographical theories propounded in the work(s)

1.1.4.4. Methodological choices

1.1.5. Reception of the work(s)

1.1.6. Bibliography on the author

The work of translation has been carried out by Raffaella Roncarati (Chaps. 2–8) and Hilary Siddons (Chap. 1), who has also been entrusted with the revision of the whole text. Our warmest thanks are due to these assiduous and valuable collaborators. The translations have been made possible thanks to funding from the MIUR (Italian Ministry for Education, Universities and Research: PRIN 2012, directed by Professor Gregorio Piaia and then by Professor Gaetano Rametta, University of Padua) and from the University of Verona (Professor Mario Longo): to them we owe our gratitude.

Padova, Italy

Giuseppe Micheli

Gregorio Piaia

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Abbreviations

(A) Literature of the Nineteenth Century

(a) Bibliographical surveys, biographical dictionaries, reference works, and critical studies

- ADB** *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig and Munich, 1875–1912), 56 vols.
- Adickes** E. Adickes, *German Kantian Bibliography* (Boston, 1895–1896; repr. New York, 1970).
- Blanch** L. Blanch, *Scritti filosofici*, ed. by F. Ottonello (Genoa, 1993).
- Cours I** V. Cousin, *Cours de philosophie. Introduction à l'histoire de la philosophie* [1828], ed. by P. Vermeren (Paris, 1991).
- Cours II** V. Cousin, *Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie*, I: *Histoire de la philosophie du XVIII^e siècle*; II: *Histoire de la philosophie du XVIII^e siècle. École sensualiste. Locke*, in *Oeuvres de V. Cousin* (Brussels, 1840–1841), I, pp. III–349.
- Cusani** S. Cusani, *Scritti*, ed. by F. Ottonello (Genoa, 1979), 2 vols.
- Damiron** Ph. Damiron, *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie en France au dix-neuvième siècle* (Brussels, 1832 [1st ed. 1828]).
- Dilthey** W. Dilthey, *Leben Schleiermachers*, I/1–2 [text of the first edition, 1870, and from the *Nachlass*], ed. by H. Mulert and M. Redeker (Berlin, 1970); II/1–2: *Schleiermachers System als Philosophie und Theologie* [from the *Nachlass*], ed. by M. Redeker (Berlin, 1966).
- DNB** *Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1885–1901), 63 vols.
- EC** *Opere edite e inedite di Antonio Rosmini*, ed. by E. Castelli and M.F. Sciacca (Rome, 1975–).
- EN** *Edizione nazionale delle opere edite e inedite di Antonio Rosmini*, ed. by E. Castelli (Rome, 1934–1977).
- Ferraz** M. Ferraz, *Histoire de la philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 1887).

- G/J** G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by P. Garniron and W. Jaeschke, in Id., *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*, vols VI-IX (Hamburg, 1994–1996).
- Gumpesch** V.Ph. Gumpesch, *Die philosophische Literatur der Deutschen von 1400 bis auf unsere Tage* (Regensburg, 1851; repr. Düsseldorf, 1967).
- Hist. comp.¹** J.-M. Degérando, *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie considérés relativement aux principes des connaissances humaines* (Paris, 1804), 3 vols.
- Hist. comp.²** J.-M. Degérando, *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie* [...], 2nd ed., part I (Paris, 1822–1823), 4 vols; part II (Paris, 1847), 4 vols.
- Hoffmeister** G.W.F. Hegel, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by J. Hoffmeister, 3rd ed., revised by F. Nicolin (Hamburg, 1959).
- Meusel** J.G. Meusel, *Lexikon der vom Jahr 1750 bis 1800 verstorbenen deutschen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig, 1802–1816; repr. Hildesheim, 1967–1968), 15 vols.
- Michelet¹** G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in *Werke*, vols XVIII-XX, ed. by E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel (Frankfurt am Main, 1971).
- Michelet²** G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by G.J.P.J. Bolland (Leiden, 1908).
- Picavet** F. Picavet, *Les Idéologues. Essai sur l'histoire des idées et des théories scientifiques, philosophiques, religieuses, etc. en France depuis 1789* (Paris, 1891; repr. Hildesheim and New York, 1972).
- Ravaisson** F. Ravaisson, *La philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 1867), now in Id., *De l'habitude. La philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 1984).
- Sainte-Beuve** Ch.-A. Sainte-Beuve, *Les grands écrivains français. Études des Lundis et des Portraits classées selon un ordre nouveaux, et annotées par M. Allen: XIX^e siècle. Philosophes et essayists*, II (Paris, 1930).
- Taine** H. Taine, *Les philosophes classiques du XIX^e siècle en France*, 13th ed. (Paris, s.d.; repr. Paris and Geneva, 1979).
- Ueberweg** F. Ueberweg, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, 12th ed. [1st ed. 1863–1866] (Berlin, 1924–1928; repr. Basel, Graz, and Tübingen, 1951–1953), 5 vols.
- Zeller** E. Zeller, *Die Geschichte der alten Philosophie in den letzverfloßenen 50 Jahren mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die neuesten Bearbeitungen derselben* [1843], in Id., *Kleine Schriften*, ed. by O. Leuze, vol. I (Berlin, 1910), pp. 1–85.

(b) Periodicals

- ALE** *Archives littéraires de l'Europe, ou Mélanges de Littérature, d'Histoire et de Philosophie* (Paris, 1804–1808; repr. Geneva, 1972).
- ALZ** *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, ed. by Chr.G. Schütz, F.J. Bertuch, and J.S. Ersch [...] (Jena and Leipzig, 1785–1803) 19 vols; (Halle, 1804–1849), 37 vols.
- ARNAL** *Allgemeines Repertorium des neuesten in- und ausländischen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1819–1832); as from 1833: *Neues allgemeines Repertorium* [...].
- BGPh** *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by G.G. Fülleborn (Züllichau and Freystadt, 1791–1797; Jena and Leipzig, 1798–1799); repr. in “Aetas Kantiana” (Brussels, 1968).
- DPhLP** *La Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique* (Paris, “10 flor. an II – 30 fruct. an XII” (afterwards: *La Revue ou Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique* (Paris, “10 niv. an XIII – 21 sept. 1807”)).
- FSI** *La Filosofia delle Scuole italiane* (Florence, 1870–1885).
- GGA** *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* (Göttingen, 1739–).
- Globe** *Le Globe. Journal philosophique et littéraire* (Paris, 1824–1832; repr. Geneva, 1974–1978).
- HJL** *Heidelbergische* [afterwards: *Heidelberger*] *Jahrbücher der Literatur* (Heidelberg, 1808–1872), 65 vols.
- JALZ** *Jenaische allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (Jena and Leipzig, 1804–1841).
- JS** *Journal des Savants* (Paris, “12 niv. - 30 prair. an V”; 1816–).
- ME** *Magazin encyclopédique, ou Journal des Sciences, des Lettres et des Arts* (Paris, 1792–1793 and 1795–1816).
- MPhHML** *Mélanges de Philosophie, d'Histoire, de Morale et de Littérature* (Paris, 1806–1811; the magazine was reborn in 1814 with the title *L'Ami de la Religion et du Roi*).
- MU** *Le Moniteur universel* (Paris, 1799–1866).
- Museo** *Museo di Letteratura e Filosofia*, afterwards: *Museo di Scienza e Letteratura* (Naples, 1841–1862).
- NLLZ** *Neue Leipziger Literaturzeitung* (Leipzig, 1803–1810).
- Progr.** *Il Progresso delle Scienze, delle Lettere e delle Arti* (Naples, 1834–1846).
- RE** *La Revue encyclopédique* (Paris 1819–1833).
- RGDL** *Repertorium des gesamten deutschen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1834–1845).
- RIF** *Rivista italiana di Filosofia* (Roma, 1886–1895).

(B) Literature of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

(a) *Bibliographical surveys, biographical dictionaries, and critical studies*

Banfi	A. Banfi, 'Concetto e sviluppo della storiografia filosofica' [1933], in Id., <i>La ricerca della realtà</i> , vol. I (Florence, 1959 [Reggio Emilia and Bologna, 1997]), pp. 101–167.
BFI 1800–1850	<i>Bibliografia filosofica italiana 1800–1850</i> (Rome, 1982).
BFI 1850–1900	<i>Bibliografia filosofica italiana 1850–1900</i> (Rome, 1969).
Braun	L. Braun, <i>Histoire de l'histoire de la philosophie</i> (Paris, 1973 [2 nd ed. 1995]).
Bréhier	É. Bréhier, <i>Histoire de la philosophie, I: L'antiquité et le moyen âge, 1: Introduction - Période hellénique</i> (8 th ed., Paris, 1963 [1 st ed. 1938]).
DBE	<i>Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie</i> (Munich, New Providence, London, Paris, 1995–2000), 12 vols.
DBF	<i>Dictionnaire de biographie française</i> (Paris, 1933–).
DBI	<i>Dizionario biografico degli italiani</i> (Rome, 1960–2020), 100 vols.
DECBPh	<i>The Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century British Philosophers</i> , ed. by J.V. Price, J.N. Stephens, and J.W. Yolton (Bristol, 1999), 2 vols.
DNCBPh	<i>The Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century British Philosophers</i> , ed. by W.J. Mander and A.P.F. Sell (Bristol, 2002), 2 vols.
DPh	<i>Dictionnaire des philosophes</i> , ed. by D. Huisman (Paris, 1984).
Düsing	K. Düsing, <i>Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie</i> (Darmstadt, 1983).
EF	<i>Enciclopedia filosofica</i> (3 rd ed., Milan, 2006), 12 vols.
EPhU	<i>Encyclopédie philosophique universelle, I: L'univers philosophique</i> , ed. by A. Jacob (Paris, 1989).
Garin	E. Garin, <i>Storia della filosofia italiana</i> (3 rd ed., Turin, 1978), 3 vols.
Geldsetzer	L. Geldsetzer, <i>Die Philosophie der Philosophiegeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert</i> (Meisenheim am Glam, 1968).
Gentile	G. Gentile, <i>Storia della filosofia italiana</i> , ed. by E. Garin (Florence, 1969), 2 vols.
Gueroult	M. Gueroult, <i>Dianoématique. I. Histoire de l'histoire de la philosophie</i> , vol. 1: <i>En Occident des origines jusqu'à Condillac</i> ; vol. 2: <i>En Allemagne de Leibniz à nos jours</i> ; vol. 3: <i>En France de Condorcet à nos jours</i> (Paris, 1984–1988).
Harnack	A. Harnack, <i>Geschichte der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin</i> (Berlin, 1900).

Hartmann	N. Hartmann, <i>Die Philosophie der deutschen Idealismus</i> , 3 rd ed. (Berlin, 1974 [1 st ed.: 1923–1929]).
HWPh	<i>Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie</i> , ed. by J. Ritter and K. Gruender (Darmstadt, 1971–1992), 8 vols.
Mastellone	S. Mastellone, <i>Victor Cousin e il Risorgimento italiano. (Dalle carte dell'Archivio Cousin)</i> (Florence, 1955).
Models	<i>Models of the History of Philosophy</i> , vol. I: <i>From its Origins in the Renaissance to the “historia philosophica”</i> , ed. by G. Santinello, English eds C.W.T. Blackwell and Ph. Weller (Dordrecht, Boston, and London, 1993); vol. II: <i>From Cartesian Age to Brucker</i> , ed. by G. Piaia and G. Santinello (Dordrecht, Heidelberg, New York, and London, 2011); vol. III: <i>The Second Enlightenment and the Kantian Age</i> , ed. by G. Piaia and G. Santinello (<i>ibid.</i> , 2015).
Moravia¹	S. Moravia, <i>Il tramonto dell'illuminismo. Filosofia e politica nella società francese (1770–1810)</i> (Bari, 1968).
Moravia²	S. Moravia, <i>La scienza dell'uomo nel Settecento</i> (Bari, 1970 [2 nd ed. 2000]).
Moravia³	S. Moravia, <i>Il pensiero degli Idéologues. Scienza e filosofia in Francia (1780–1815)</i> (Florence, 1974 [2 nd ed. 2000]).
NDB	<i>Neue deutsche Biographie</i> (Berlin, 1953–).
Oldrini	G. Oldrini, <i>La cultura filosofica napoletana dell'Ottocento</i> (Rome and Bari, 1973).
Ottonello	F. Ottonello, <i>Cultura filosofica nella stampa periodica dell'Italia meridionale della prima metà dell'Ottocento</i> (Milan, 1977–1989), 5 vols.
Ragghianti	R. Ragghianti, <i>La tentazione del presente. Victor Cousin tra filosofie della storia e teorie della memoria</i> (Naples, 1997).
Schneider	U.J. Schneider, <i>Philosophie und Universität. Historisierung der Vernunft im 19. Jahrhundert</i> (Hamburg, 1999).
Sciacca	M.F. Sciacca, <i>Il pensiero italiano nell'età del Risorgimento</i> (2 nd ed., Milan, 1963).
SSGF	<i>Storia delle storie generali della filosofia</i> , vol. V: <i>Il secondo Ottocento</i> , ed. by G. Santinello (†) and G. Piaia (Rome and Padua, 2004).
Tolomio	I. Tolomio, “ <i>Italarum sapientia</i> ”. <i>L'idea di esperienza nella storiografia filosofica italiana dell'età moderna</i> (Soveria Mannelli [Cz], 1999).
Totok	W. Totok, <i>Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie</i> , V: <i>Bibliographie: 18. und 19. Jahrhundert</i> (Frankfurt a.M., 1986).
Vermeren	P. Vermeren, <i>Victor Cousin: le jeu de la philosophie et de l'État</i> (Paris, 1995).

(b) Periodicals

- AGPh** *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* (1888–).
BJHP *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (1993–).
GCFI *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* (Florence, 1920–).
EPh *Les études philosophiques* (Paris, 1926–).
HJ *Hegel-Jahrbuch* (Berlin, 1961–).
HSt *Hegel-Studien* (Hamburg, 1961–).
RFN *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica* (Milan, 1909–).
RPhFE *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* (Paris, 1876–).

Part I
The Historiography of Philosophy in the
Germanic Area

Chapter 1

Hermeneutics and the History of Philosophy



Mario Longo

Introduction

(a) Preliminary remarks

The rich panorama of German historiography of philosophy in the first half of the nineteenth century was replete with various differing tendencies and works of a fundamental nature, but the “general” history of philosophy was a more limited and less significant presence than it had been in the previous period. The earlier period had seen great German historians like Brucker and Tennemann, who created an authentic European model of historiography of a “general” nature, as Cousin recognised (cf. *Cours*, I, pp. 339–341). Now we see the prevalence of monographic works on more circumscribed sectors of the history of thought: the Greek and Roman period, Oriental thought, Patristic and Scholastic philosophy, and above all the history of modern or even contemporary thought (from Kant onwards). It was to make up for the lack of a general history that Wendt brought out a new edition of Tennemann’s *Geschichte der Philosophie*, only the first volume of which actually came out however, in 1829 (see *Models*, III, p. 863). The same year saw the first volume of August Heinrich Ritter’s *Geschichte der Philosophie* (1829–1854, 12 vols), which, in its size and methodological and interpretative originality, was an ideal continuation of Tennemann’s work.

From Ritter’s work onwards, general histories of philosophy were written almost exclusively for the academic world, both as student textbooks, like Tennemann’s (with its various updated editions), Rixner’s and Reinhold’s, and as edited versions of the *Vorlesungen* given by the principal exponents of philosophical culture. Of particular note, even though they had a greater impact in the second half of the nineteenth and during the twentieth century, were the *Vorlesungen* of Schleiermacher, published posthumously by Ritter in 1839, and those of Hegel, published by Michelet from 1833 to 1836. The fact that these were published almost

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simultaneously seems to bring together, or rather to juxtapose, two writers who were long connected to the University of Berlin, where they represented opposite political, cultural, and philosophical tendencies.¹ Yet it also indicates the need for works of a general nature at a time when historiography was veering off towards specialization, and the need to frame these works within the categories of more contemporary philosophical speculation.

In his *Leben Schleiermachers* Wilhelm Dilthey attributes great importance to Hegel and Schleiermacher's works (perhaps too much, since they were after all academic course books) and he places them at the pinnacle of modern historiography of philosophy. Although highlighting the differences in thought and method between the two, Dilthey nevertheless believes it is possible to integrate their different attitudes and is convinced that a combination of aspects present in the two philosophers will influence all subsequent historiography of philosophy: "It was a lucky coincidence for our history of philosophy that Hegel and Schleiermacher complemented each other in their way of proceeding" (Dilthey, II/1, p. 46). Unlike Dilthey, more recent works on the history of the historiography of philosophy have stressed the greater weight and importance of the Hegelian tendency. One of the more recent of these, by L. Geldsetzer, has identified three historiographical models: the first, inspired by the present, by contemporary philosophy, is represented by Kant; the second looks back to the past in search of a truth already revealed, and this is Schleiermacher's approach; and the third is a synthesis of the previous two and is represented by Hegel's historiography of philosophy.²

A long scholarly tradition seems to confirm Geldsetzer's classification. In an important article, written at the beginning of his work on the history of philosophy, Eduard Zeller subdivided historians of ancient thought into three classes: the first, made up of Tiedemann, Buhle, and Tennemann, took a historical and philological approach; the second, made up of Schleiermacher and the followers of Schelling, created the model of an overall vision and hence made it possible to understand the individual; and the third, with Hegel, managed to create a speculative model, made possible – Zeller stresses – by a philosophy which, through dialectic, reached an understanding of the universal in the individual and of the individual in the universal, that is to say, of the concrete universal (Zeller, pp. 51–52).

Zeller's idea was taken up by H. G. Gadamer in his work on the interpretation of the pre-Socratics: "something of a completely different genre", he begins his discussion of Hegel after having dealt with Schleiermacher and his school, "was the

¹Cf. G. Moretto, 'Introduzione', in F. Schleiermacher, *Etica ed ermeneutica* (Naples, 1984), pp. 13–16, and K. Rosenkranz, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben* [1844] (Darmstadt, 1977), p. 327, which mention the possibility of a positive, though indirect, influence of Schleiermacher on the formation of Hegel's system. On Schleiermacher's political doctrines, which were opposed to Hegel's "sultanesque political theory", because of their liberal tendencies, cf. C. Cesa, *Fichte, i romantici, Hegel*, in *Storia delle idee politiche, economiche e sociali*, ed. by L. Firpo, IV/2 (Torino, 1975), pp. 814–816.

²Cf. L. Geldsetzer, 'Tre tipi sistematici di storiografia filosofica', *Criterio. Nuova serie filosofica*, VII (1989), 2, pp. 108–113.

influence of Hegel which soon began to dominate everything philosophically” (Gadamer, *I Presocratici*, p. 32). Now it is precisely this “philosophically” (the “speculative” element underlined by Zeller) that distinguishes Hegel’s position from that of Schleiermacher in the field of the history of philosophy. But the distinction is not to be understood (as Zeller, Gadamer, and Geldsetzer would seem to suggest) in a purely historical (or critical and philological) perspective, typical of Schleiermacher, which should be both preserved and annulled at the same time, that is to say “made real”, by following Hegel’s speculative, dialectic method. Schleiermacher, instead, represents the most convinced criticism of all historiography of an *a priori* nature, a “constructive criticism” (as Martial Gueroult calls it) which, by stressing the opposition between history and philosophy, refused to treat history “philosophically” and at the same time demanded that philosophy be treated “historically” (Gueroult, II, pp. 481–482).

The priority given to history over philosophy is however always accompanied by an awareness of the danger of falling into the opposite one-sided approach, pure empirics, a fragmentary description of the historical elements without any reference to the totality. What defines the specific nature of Schleiermacher’s historiography is the use of hermeneutical canons, understood however, not as a set of rules elaborated for a specific area of study, but as the constituents of a general “technical” discipline, linked to language and communication, and so ultimately, to man and his relationship with the world, the human and historical world in particular. As Werner Jaeger observed, this type of philosophical hermeneutics “enriched and animated” methodological discussion of all those sciences which in the course of the nineteenth century were to be known as the “sciences of the spirit”. It was not by chance that Dilthey referred directly to Schleiermacher in defining hermeneutics as “an important intermediary between philosophy and the historical sciences, a fundamental element for the foundation of the sciences of the spirit”.³

(b) *Hermeneutics, philology, and historiography*

Schleiermacher claimed this important position for hermeneutics, at a time in which the need was felt to establish hermeneutics as the “art of understanding” (*als Kunst des Verstehens*), which is above all general (*allgemein*), as opposed to the special hermeneutics that had been cultivated up to that point, which was merely an “aggregate of observations”.⁴ The concept is again stressed in a note (dated 1828) in which, after pointing out the relationship between “criticism” and “hermeneutics”, Schleiermacher stresses the superiority of the latter, “in as far as it is necessary even where there is no place for criticism, in general because criticism must stop being carried out, but not hermeneutics. The hermeneutical task is always

³W. Dilthey, *Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik*, in Id., *Gesammelte Schriften* [1900], vol. V (Stuttgart and Göttingen, 1982), p. 331. Cf. W. Jaeger, ‘Die Entwicklung des Studiums der griechischen Philosophie seit dem Erwachen des historischen Bewusstseins’, in Id., *Scripta minora* (Rome, 1960), I, pp. 401–402.

⁴F.D.E. Schleiermacher, ‘Die Kompendienartige Darstellung von 1819’, in Id., *Hermeneutik*, ed. by H. Kimmerle (Heidelberg 1974²), p. 75.

re-presented” (*die hermeneutische Aufgabe kehrt immer wieder*)” (*Hermeneutik*, p. 75).

The problem does not simply concern the breadth or the generality of the use of hermeneutical rules, but rather the foundation of hermeneutics and its relationship with other disciplines. From this point of view, it is interesting in the first place to examine the link between hermeneutics and philosophy and its parts. Schleiermacher denies that hermeneutics is to be placed within logic (as an appendix), as it had usually been treated in the course of the eighteenth century; indeed, he observes, it cannot really be considered part of philosophy: “The philosopher in himself (*der Philosoph an sich*) does not tend to cultivate hermeneutical theory, because he rarely sets himself the task of understanding, but believes he should be understood” (p. 76).

Schleiermacher countered the model of philosophical knowledge as self-sufficient, dogmatic, and abstract, with a dynamic concept of philosophy centred on dialectic and on the necessary correlation of dialectic with rhetoric and hermeneutics. In this sense, in relation to dialectic, Schleiermacher also refers to hermeneutics using the adjective “philosophical” (*philosophisch*): “Since the art of speaking and the art of understanding correspond to each other, as speaking is nothing but the outward side of thought, hermeneutics is connected to the art of thought and is therefore philosophical”. Hermeneutics does not simply have an affinity of content with dialectic and rhetoric, since they all have the same object, namely discourse, but it represents in a certain sense their unity. Indeed, if discourse is “mediation in view of the community of thought”, dialectic requires communication, an openness to the other through words, and it therefore requires rhetoric, to integrate it. The movement between these two disciplines is mediated by hermeneutics: “Their affinity depends on the fact that every act of understanding is the inversion (*die Umkehrung*) of an act of discourse; that thought that is at the basis of discourse must become conscious” From this derives the well-known distinction between the two fundamental forms of interpretation, known as grammatical and technical, which are not two different, independent forms of understanding, but rather the two correlated and integrating modes of a single process, as Schleiermacher establishes at the end of his analysis of the relationship between hermeneutics and rhetoric and dialectics: “As all discourse has a dual relationship with the totality of the language and the overall thought of its author, all understanding consists of two moments: understanding the discourse as something proceeding from the language and understanding it as reality in the thinking person” (*ibid.*).

This broadening of the horizon of hermeneutics reflects the spirit of the romantic movement with its attempt on one hand to connect philosophy to literature and art, and, on the other, to give philology and through it historiography, a “philosophical” importance. The characteristic element of the historiography of philosophy of the romantic period has been seen as the new role taken on by historiography, which is now appreciated in itself: no long merely in an ancillary role, but rather with a fundamental importance for the theoretical and systematic disciplines. This brings out the typical questions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiography: the problem of the circularity between philosophy and the history of philosophy and the

attempt to place philosophy in a wider historical context, as an expression of the “spirit” of each age (cf. Heß, *Das romantische Bild der Philosophiegeschichte*, pp. 251–256). These were the themes of debate for the intellectuals close to the journal “Athenäum”. One of the most active and provocative members of this group, who used paradox and irony as a means of expression, was Friedrich Leopold von Hardenberg, who, from the first issue of “Athenäum” (April 1798), took on the pseudonym of Novalis and who, partly because of his premature death (1801) and even given the fragmentary nature of his works, represented the ideas of the romantics most completely, both in tone and content.

Novalis offered many different definitions of philosophy. The first and most well-known is the following: “Strictly speaking, philosophy is nostalgia (*Heimweh*), the desire to feel oneself at home everywhere”.⁵ As a corollary he affirms the identity of philosophy and poetry (as a consequence of the identity of the intellect and imagination): “Without philosophy, imperfect poet, without philosophy, imperfect thinker and critic” (fr. 26). Now, if we compare this definition with subsequent ones, we can see an obvious change of perspective and a reference to the philosophers who were then fashionable, from Kant to Fichte: “The possibility of philosophy is based on the possibility of producing thoughts according to rules, of really thinking in common [*sympphilosophieren*]” (fr. 43). A third definition, a synthesis of the former two, is perhaps that which best illustrates Novalis’ point of view: in fragment 31 he presents philosophy as the “science of sciences”, but he also adds the adjective “indeterminate” (*eine unbestimmte Wissenschaft der Wissenschaften*). Philosophy, therefore, is something “mysterious” that has some connection with the “instinct of knowledge” and cannot be represented by a concept or a precise image, unless it is applied to a particular science. There is no concrete philosophy, as there had been for Kant or Fichte, but it can only be described as a sort of ideal, “a mere task” or “the philosopher’s stone”, the pursuit of which serves to guide the work of scientists. Philosophy does not express “anything specific”, but only “a supreme power of scientificity” (fr. 45). Novalis also defines it as the “philosophy of philosophy”, a sort of philosophy squared or a meta-philosophy, which does not exist as something real, but only as an ideal. Philosophy, therefore, has an individual, concrete, and real aspect, and a universal, ideal, and abstract aspect. This second aspect is realised in the individual through attempts at philosophizing, but it can only be partially realized and so nostalgia and the desire for ideal philosophy always remain.

But we cannot use the history of philosophy, which describes the concrete realizations of the various philosophies, to explain the philosophy of philosophy, or philosophy as an idea. Philosophy, states Novalis, is fundamentally anti-historical (fr. 25), it proceeds from the future and moves towards the present, from the necessary to the real; history, on the other hand, explains the future with the past, rejects the necessary and considers everything as isolated and in the state of nature. For Novalis, the history of the philosophers does not properly belong to philosophy but

⁵Cf. Novalis, *Werke in vier Teilen*, ed. by H. Friedemann (Berlin, Leipzig, Vienna, and Stuttgart, s.d.), Part III: *Philosophische Fragmente*, p. 28.

to philosophical philology; up until now, the history of the formation of humanity has always been confused with the history of the philosophers, in an attempt to attain lexicographical completeness, and this has produced “those hybrids and those monstrosities in which everything that has some relevance to philosophy or that contains the mere word philosophy is set out under the heading philosophy” (fr. 62). The true history of philosophy must coincide with philosophy: “A truly philosophical system must contain the pure history of philosophy. Applied to the special story of the formation of philosophy among men, it produces the history of human philosophy” (fr. 110).

The ideal explains the real and not vice versa; philosophy therefore offers the principles which explain the history of philosophy, but it is not, in turn, something original, an absolutely independent *primum*. Indeed, if it is true that, according to another very neat definition, the philosopher “translates the real world into the world of thought and vice versa in order to give both of them an intelligence” (fr. 63), it is also true that the philosopher does not create anything in itself, but proceeds from something already given, from “an initial knowledge of something”. Above the philosopher, therefore, and before the philosopher, is the poet and the greatest philosopher is the poet philosopher who, in a French expression used by Novalis, is *en état de Créateur absolu* (fr. 65). Philosophy comes first historically, then comes poetry: indeed, every science becomes poetry after having been philosophy (fr. 348); but ideally, higher things, and hence poetry, come first (fr. 65). Poetry therefore is at the basis of philosophy and the history of philosophy, and universal history in general. If history describes the revelation of the mystery of man in action (and all history, even that of philosophy, is always universal), its task will be infinite, at least as long as man exists and until the mystery is completely revealed. The history of philosophy “as a science in grand style”, will contain the attempts to resolve this ideal problem (fr. 178). As it only contains attempts, adds Novalis, the history of philosophy would be possible even if philosophy didn’t exist, because it would be nothing other than “a history of the attempts to discover philosophizing” (fr. 178). This is the most precise definition of the history of philosophy that Novalis has given us. Philosophy cannot exist as something real and concrete, but individual philosophies do exist as such, as they are particular interpretations of ideal philosophy, attempts to realize it. Nevertheless, philosophy in its ideal form has always existed, ever since the mystery of man, and it is also called the “philosophy of philosophy” and made to coincide with poetry (the “philosopher poet”). Only this, and not the thought of someone like Kant or Fichte, can provide the foundation and the reasons to explain the history of philosophy.

The relationship between philosophy and history is analogous to that between philosophy and the history of philosophy. All history is always universal history (fr. 1058), so the history of philosophy comes to coincide with universal history as well as with philosophy. History is contrasted, on one hand, with philosophy, as it refers to “a given” and not “a fact”, but on the other, it has a philosophical part (fr. 1062). History is both musical and plastic, states Novalis, the former aspect is philosophy and the latter is narration, but it is only science when it is animated by philosophy: “only when the philosopher appears under the spoils of Orpheus, does the whole

(*das Ganze*) order itself in common and elevated regular, formed and notable masses – in true sciences” (fr. 1067). Philosophy, therefore, provides the principles which unify and organise historical facts, and, on one hand, it is the condition why history exists (“before these principles exist there are no true historical frameworks but only sporadic traces of fortuitous vivifications in which the dominion of a spontaneous genius manifested itself”) (fr. 1070), and, on the other, the ideal towards which history tends. Moving between two limits represented by the mass of data and the absolute unit of measurement, history will always be incomplete (fr. 1068) and it cannot be realized in concrete form, just as philosophy is not concretely realizable.

By taking into account both levels of philosophical discourse, the higher level of poetry-philosophy and that of the individual philosophies, we can understand the new concept of philology which Novalis presents. Like history, this also has two sides, one philosophical and one historical, one pure and one applied. As an applied science, philology deals with books, while the pure part “deals directly with original nature” (fr. 1334). Though this reference “to original nature” is not further clarified, it is clear that Novalis places philology in his higher concept of philosophy, partly because of the link it creates between concepts and words (fr. 1168), because of the statement that thought is necessarily verbal (fr. 1171), and more in general because of the concept of language as “the product of the organic instinct of formation” which as such “becomes the profound expression of the idea of organisation, becomes the system of philosophy” (fr. 1161).

These themes, the definition of philosophy and its relationship with historiography and language, and hence the affinity of philosophy with disciplines like philology, grammar, and rhetoric, were at the centre of the debate of that cultural movement which for a short period of time constituted a school, “the romantic school”, which was characterized essentially by the compenetrations of poetry and philosophy.⁶ The principal figure to theorize this new approach was Friedrich Schlegel, a writer close to Schleiermacher, above all in his youth, from the time of their collaboration at the “Athenäum” to their plan to translate the dialogues of Plato, conceived as a joint endeavour but carried out by Schleiermacher alone.

In the fragments of his *Zur Philologie* written around 1797, F. Schlegel put forward the need for a “philosophy of philology” (*Philosophie der Philologie*) essentially on the basis of his need to gain a complete personal education, which he describes using the expression “Philological imperative” (*der philologische Imperativ*): “a great and important use of philology consists in providing the critical foundation of man in a regulated way”.⁷ Indeed, as he observes, “all philology is necessarily philosophical, whether we like it or not, whether we realise it or not” (p. 51), and we must remember that “a pure philosophy without philology only constitutes half of a man’s logical training” (p. 47). Philology has a very broad

⁶Cf. R. Haym, *Die romantische Schule. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Geist* (Hildesheim, 1961), p. 7.

⁷F. Schlegel, ‘Zur Philologie’, in Id., *Kritische Ausgabe*, vol. XVI (Paderborn, Munich, and Vienna, 1981), p. 51.

range, which goes from criticism to grammar and hermeneutics; these can only be separated when they are presented, but on the basis of their essence they coincide and are all “philology”. But the relationship between philosophy and philology must not be understood as the application of one to the other. The philologist must be a philosopher; this is the sense of the expression the “philosophy of philology”: not the application of philology to philosophy (which would lead to the death of philology and history), but the exercise of philosophy by the philologist in carrying out his tasks.

The coincidence of philology and philosophy, therefore, is not of a disciplinary nature, but concerns rather the process of their constitution by a “genial” subject, he who manages to take on the role of the philologist and the philosopher at the same time. This is further specified in the *Athenäums-Fragmente* published in 1798: “The only way of applying philosophy to philology or, something much more necessary, philology to philosophy, is to be both a philologist and a philosopher”.⁸ Deriving from this is a new way of understanding philosophy itself, which is by nature historical; the philosophy of philology is nothing but the philosophy of history and every historian must be a philologist (*Athenäums-Fragmente*, p. 221). The reference of philosophy to philology is so essential that it could not be understood if not in its becoming, as history. In the *Athenäums-Fragmente* and his *Ideen* (published separately in the “*Athenäum*” in 1800) the concept is expressed clearly, albeit in the context of the debate raised by Winckelmann and Lessing on the relationship between poetry and painting: “Just as Simonides said that poetry is a speaking painting and painting a silent poem, so we could say that history is a philosophy *in fieri* and philosophy a completed history” (*Athenäums-Fragmente*, p. 221). Philosophy, that is, is a process of live forces that organize themselves and dissolve, not a set of principles or stable and immobile knowledge. Philosophy therefore is more than a science and, together with poetry, even has affinities with religion; just as “he who has religion will speak the language of poetry” because he has “an original intuition of the infinite” (*eine originelle Ansicht des Unendlichen*), so “only through religion does philosophy arise from logic, only from there does everything come that makes philosophy more than science” (*Ideen*, p. 257); this something, which is more than science and which is the religious background of philosophy, is finally defined as “omniscience”, so it is possible to conclude that “philosophising means seeking omniscience in common” (*eine originelle Ansicht des Unendlichen*).

This concept of philosophy linked to religion and poetry instead of science is naturally connected to history. Regarding the debate on the relationship between philosophy and history, which was particularly heated in the age of Kant and idealism, F. Schlegel urged the historian to have a critical awareness of philosophy, in order to avoid prejudices of a dogmatic nature. History, whose aim is to make everything that is practically necessary happen, cannot disregard concepts; if anything it must reject *a priori* ideas, that is to say, preconceived ideas: “As hypotheses are

⁸F. Schlegel, *Charakteristiken und Kritiken*, I (1796–1801), in Id., *Kritische Ausgabe*, vol. II (Munich, Paderborn, and Vienna, 1967), p. 242. The *Ideen* are in the same volume, following the *Fragmente*, published in “*Athenaeum*” in 1800.

attacked so much, we should try for once to write history without hypotheses. It is not possible to say that a thing is without saying what it is. In the act of thinking them we refer facts to concepts, and it is not indifferent which concepts we refer them to. If we are persuaded of this, we determine and choose between possible concepts the necessary ones, to which we must refer facts of all kinds. If we do not want to recognise them, the choice is made by instinct, or in a random, or arbitrary way: we flatter ourselves that we have a pure solid completely *a posteriori* empirical knowledge, while instead we have an *a priori* idea which is extremely one-sided, extremely dogmatic and transcendent" (*Athenäums-Fragmente*, pp. 201–202).

If philosophy deals with the general, or the totality, according to the most common definition of the time, and history with the particular or the individual, F. Schlegel naturally takes the former as the guide and criterion for judging the latter. In this he agrees both with Novalis and Schleiermacher, even though over the years, as the controversy with the supporters of *a priori* historiography developed, Schleiermacher (and his students) tended to stress the abstract and one-sided nature of a historiography based on a speculative viewpoint. In outlining its historical "characteristic" (cf. below, pp. 18–25), Schlegel tended rather to separate the two approaches to the history of philosophy, the philosophical and the historical, maintaining the independence of historiography from philosophical criticism. The two positions are not in contrast, however, since the philosophy to which the exponents of the romantic school referred did not identify itself with any concrete historical manifestation of the philosophical and scientific spirit, and it was highly critical of the claims made by systems like those of Kant and Fichte to be absolutely valid. The object of philosophy is rather the absolute, the infinite object, the unconditioned foundation of every condition, but speculation has revealed itself to be incapable of describing it completely, and even less of possessing it. "We cannot define or conceive of the universe", stated F. Schlegel, "but only intuit and reveal it".⁹ This explains the need to seek another path, which is formulated in various ways and can be based on poetry (Novalis), philology (F. Schlegel), or hermeneutics (Schleiermacher), which become the foundation of both philosophy itself and historiography.

The fact that historiography should open up to philosophy, as F. Schlegel suggested, does not mean therefore taking on the criteria of judgement of 'a' philosophy, but rather considering every historical fact, every thinker, doctrine or system as belonging to a greater unity, of which it is a necessary element and from which it derives meaning. This unit can be intuited but not conceptually defined, and therefore it cannot be the point of departure for a demonstration which, applied to history, would lead to the deduction or construction of empirical facts without reference to spatial and temporal conditions. Historiography can only follow the inductive method, not however by reconstructing a unity from a multiplicity, but rather by intuiting the unity in every concrete historical element. To understand history, and the history of the spirit (*Geistesgeschichte*) in particular, Schlegel explains that is

⁹N. Hartmann, *Die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus* (Berlin and New York, 1974), p. 172.

necessary to avoid the postulate of generality (*Postulat der Gemeinheit*) on one hand, which leads us to consider all true greatness as improbable, and the axiom of habit (*Axiom der Gewohnlichkeit*) on the other, which leads us to see that which we grasp near us everywhere (*Zur Philologie*, in *Kritische Ausgabe*, XVI, p. 41). The historical object, always individual, unique, and exceptional, is to be understood as a manifestation of the spirit, starting from our spirituality (cf. Hartmann, *Die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus*, pp. 183–184).

This new perspective, in which the historical and philological point of view is integrated with the philosophical, without resolving itself in it, was soon perceived as being the most notable result of the development of German historiography from Winckelmann onwards: in Germany, observed August Boeckh, a scholar of Antiquity and pupil of Schleiermacher and for a long time professor in Berlin from the time of Winckelmann, Lessing, Herder, and the Schlegels, “life in Antiquity started to be considered as a whole and there was an attempt to find its spirit. This approach was first of all followed in the philosophy of history, which had to integrate itself even more with philology. Works on the philosophy of history contain, however, very useful impulses for philological research”.¹⁰ Boeckh attempted to resolve the apparent conflict between philosophy and philology by proposing a new philological method, which was coherent with Schlegel’s ideas mentioned earlier, and above all with Schleiermacher’s concept of hermeneutics.¹¹ It is very difficult, Boeckh explained, to express the overall character of an epoch or a nation with concepts, and yet if we work in a scientific fashion, then we must proceed by using concepts (*nur mit Begriffen*). The difficulty lies in the fact that those concepts cannot be derived philosophically, but only through philology (*nur auf philologischen Wege*). We can undoubtedly criticise the attitude of philosophers who adapt historical facts to fit their theories, but we must admit at the same time the need for a historical speculation (*die geschichtliche Speculation*) which is rigorously based on the facts.

From the theoretical point of view, the problem inherent in the expression “historical speculation” is analogous to that presented by Schleiermacher at the beginning of his *Geschichte der Philosophie* (cf. below, p. 60), and it is the problem of the circularity between philosophy and history. We cannot derive the spirit (or

¹⁰A. Boeckh, *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften* (Leipzig, 1886²), p. 305. The first edition, which came out posthumously in 1877, was edited by Ernst Bratuscheck, who tells us that in the 26 semesters (from 1809 to 1865) in which he gave lectures on the encyclopedia of philology, Boeckh used an exercise book which he had written in since the beginning, in 1809.

¹¹After recognising a complete system outlined in a magisterial fashion in Schleiermacher’s works on hermeneutics, published by Friedrich Luecke under the title *Hermeneutik und Kritik* (Berlin, 1837), Boeckh states that he was also inspired by previous reflection on hermeneutics, written in notes and unpublished works (among these the work cited above, see note 4); cfr. Boeckh, *Encyklopädie*, p. 75. Elsewhere, along with the translation of Plato’s dialogues, described as “the best translation of the prose masterpiece” (p. 159), he also praises the introductions to the individual dialogues, in which he finds the union of “the most sublime congeniality and the most profound study” (p. 168).

character) of a civilization from facts and proceed by generalization: the totality of the facts (*die Totalität der Thatsachen*) must be placed at the foundation of this. Yet this totality cannot exist before the facts and independently of them, but only through them. Faced with this antinomy, Boeckh moved from the theoretical plane, where he had first established himself, and demonstrated concretely the possibility of finding a solution on the plane of practical philology. It is not difficult, he observed, to understand what the totality is to be grasped in: you take the great spheres of life, like public and private life, or art and culture. These have to be understood in their peculiarity (*in ihrer Eigenthümlichkeit*), each in itself and in its links with the others. The method to be followed is inductive; indeed, the characteristic element of each of the spiritual spheres is to be found by means of induction, by extracting it from all the forms that live subordinately within it; and the character of these forms, Boeckh again stressed, can be known by following the same method starting from individual phenomena. Going back to the theoretical plane, Boeckh finally observes the inevitable presence of a circle between the historical totality and the parts that make it up, which always renders the work of the philologist (and the historian) incomplete: "Now, induction is never complete (*nie vollständig*), hence from this point of view the task can only be resolved in an approximate way. Moreover, the individualities themselves can only be understood exactly in the light of an overall vision of Antiquity, so the circle based on the essence of philological activity re-emerges, a circle that can be avoided in turn only approximately" (*Encyklopädie*, p. 264).

The distinction Boeckh describes between philosophy and philology and the identification of philology with history also derive from Schleiermacher. While philosophy forms the ideal side of human activity, constituting the conceptual knowledge of the universe (*die begriffliche Erkenntnis des Universums*), philology is knowledge of that which is produced by the human spirit, that is, of the known (*das Erkennen des vom menschlichen Geist Producirten, d.h. des Erkannten*). "The history of all the sciences, therefore", observes Boeckh, "is philological. But the concept of philology is not only this; rather, it coincides in a broad sense with that of history. History and philology are in general very similar" (p. 10). The concept of the history of philosophy therefore becomes problematic, since it is made up of two mutually exclusive parts, the philosophical and the historical (or philological) element, which it must be possible to unify or, at least, to relate to one another, if we wish to create a coherent and complete history of philosophy. Boeckh resolves the difficulty by broadening the meaning to be attributed to philosophizing, which, rooted historically, takes on a more open and comprehensive dimension compared to the dogmatic narrowness that derives from the individual's attempt to construct a system (cf. below, pp. 45–47).

(c) *The "development of philosophy" according to F. Schlegel. Philosophical "criticism" and the historical "characteristic".*

Friedrich Schlegel's most complete work on the historiography of philosophy is contained in the first course he held in Cologne, written from 1804 to 1806 but published posthumously by Windischmann in 1836. It was a private course, or rather an

extremely private one, since it was only held for three of his friends in Cologne, but it is often considered by critics to be F. Schlegel's best philosophical work.¹² The history of philosophy is dealt with as an introduction, according to an already consolidated practice in university teaching, but it does not take up all of the 'Einleitung'; indeed it is not even the first approach to philosophy, which is instead a theoretical and systematic treatment, which Schlegel describes as "critical". Any other type of beginning, the "rhetorical" approach of the Ancients which related philosophy to life, the "encyclopedic" approach of the moderns, which linked philosophy to the sciences, or the "logical" approach of the scholastics which rooted it in metaphysics, is inadequate, because it always presupposed what it introduces, that is, philosophy. The "criticism" employed by Schlegel does not seem to require a preliminary definition of philosophy or a historical justification: "the object of history can only be the living. History recounts and represents actions, facts, and events; but this cannot happen in a history of philosophy. Here we meet ideas, opinions, and thoughts, researching, explaining, and judging which is not the object of history but of criticism" (*Die Entwicklung der Philosophie*, p. 112).

Criticism, therefore, is of books and (historically given) systems, not Kant's "criticism of the faculty of reason in general". When indicating its field and modes of action, Schlegel explains that it has to refer only to those philosophers whose original and complete works have come down to us, for us to be able to grasp the doctrines in the "whole" of the system, remembering that philosophy has not yet reached its degree of perfection and completeness, and distinguishing, despite this, true philosophy from false, in order to show the degrees of greater or lesser approximation of each system to the truth. Schlegel's "criticism" goes decisively beyond Kant's: it does not limit itself to the formal aspect, to the particular form which the philosophical content assumes, but it deals particularly and exclusively with this

¹² F. Schlegel, *Die Entwicklung der Philosophie in zwölf Büchern*, in *Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. by E. Behler, XII, pp. 107–480; XIII, pp. 1–175 (Munich, Paderborn, and Vienna, 1964). Our analysis is limited to the first book: *Einleitung und historische Charakteristik der Philosophie nach ihrer sukzessiven Entwicklung*, XII, pp. 107–323. Because of its analogous approach and the fact that it takes up some of the same themes, the Cologne course can be interpreted as the continuation of another course held in Jena in 1800–1801, now published under the title 'Transzendentalphilosophie' (*Kritische Ausgabe*, XII, pp. 1–105). Scholars have focused on this work above all because it may contain the source of Hegel's concept of dialectic and the very framework of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (cf. E. Behler, 'Hegel und Friedrich Schlegel', in Id., *Studien zur Romantik und idealistischen Philosophie*, Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, and Zürich 1988, pp. 9–45). On the assumption of the identification of philosophy with history and of consciousness with history (*Das Bewußtseyn ist eine Geschichte*), the periods of development of philosophy are described here in an analogy with the development of the consciousness. This proceeds in a triadic rhythm, in which the last degree overcomes and at the same time renders true the previous two degrees. First we have the ages of error, which follow on from one another according to these three faculties: 1) sensation, 2) intuition, and 3) representation; they are followed by the ages of truth: 1) intellection (*die Einsicht*), 2) reason, and 3) intellect. The intellect represents return and contains all the ages in units (with the possibility of joining Fichte and Spinoza). Philosophy is also divided in a dialectic triad: 1) the theory of the world, 2) the theory of man, and 3) the philosophy of philosophy, or the return of philosophy in itself.

content: “it only has to do with the matter (*mit der Materie*), since criticism must be a characteristic of the contents of a work or a philosophical system” (*Ib.*).

Criticism can be an introduction to philosophy only if it presents itself not as an activity which simply “judges” reason, but “with good reason an objectively productive, creative thought”, capable therefore of making knowledge of truth emerge, despite all impediment, as if by magic (cf. Benjamin, *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik*, p. 51). In this sense, criticism is philosophical, even though it is not yet a philosophy: “Criticism of philosophy does not require any other premises than those that lie at the basis of all critical work; criticism must come before the system, explain all philosophy by itself, not from the point of view of a definite system; it must seek to find out whether it reaches the ideal of philosophy formulated, hence proceed only philosophically, but not philosophise in turn” (*Die Entwicklung der Philosophie*, p. 286).

Criticism, albeit *bloss philosophisch*, cannot but relate to history, from which it takes the “matter” for its operation; indeed, Schlegel states that “the method of philosophy must be historical” (p. 98) since history represents the element connecting theory and empirics. A circular relationship is thus created between criticism and history (historiography) in which one is explained on the basis of the other (cf. the criticism of Kant for his relative lack of interest in the history of philosophy – who, according to Schlegel, should have been “*mehr Philologe*” – and the proposal to integrate Kant’s work with that of Lessing: p. 291). The same can be said of the relationship between criticism and philosophy. The criteria on the basis of which criticism operates cannot be deduced philosophically from a system; however there must be a certain idea of philosophy at the basis of criticism, not only to create a preliminary outline of the field of research, but also to serve as a point of reference, at least initially, for comparison and evaluation. For this reason, Schlegel, who had excluded the possibility of proceeding from a definition of philosophy, is forced at a certain point, while explaining the tasks of criticism, to give a definition which he himself describes as “brief, temporary, superficial, and vague”: philosophy is “knowledge of the inside of man, of the original causes of nature, of the relationship between man and nature and his link with it; or, if an effectively complete philosophy does not yet exist, the striving (*ein Streben*) towards this knowledge” (p. 110).

The difficulty of the definition derives from the very nature of philosophy and its relationship with its object. Poetry and philosophy have the same object, the infinite, but they differ in their form: poetry is limited to intuiting, evoking, portending the divine, while philosophy tends towards positive knowledge, to scientifically determining its object. Since this object is infinite, the process of knowledge will also be infinite, and philosophy will never become a complete, perfect science, but will always be a searching, a tending towards science (*ein Suchen, Streben nach Wissenschaft*) (p. 166). At the basis of criticism, therefore, is this concept of philosophy, or rather, this intellectual attitude of research, which constitutes philosophizing, always accompanied by an awareness of the impossibility of completely reaching its object. The first function of criticism, therefore, is negative and it makes us unmask false philosophies which have taken a path on which they will never meet their object; it also allows use to judge “the greater or lesser distance from the

true” of true philosophies, their greater or lesser capacity to scientifically represent the absolute.

Criticism also contains a positive part, which Schlegel defines as “characteristic” (*Charakteristik*), to be understood as the “search for all the possible types of philosophy”. It is a search that does not simply mean compiling a list of the systems that have appeared in the course of history, deducing all the possible forms of philosophy, or demonstrating the need for those that exist, but rather scientifically constructing every philosophy (*wissenschaftliche Konstruktion aller Philosophie*). Only the scientific construction of philosophies is possible, not their demonstration, since there is no absolutely ‘true’ philosophy from which to deduce the possible variants of a system. The object of philosophy does exist, however, and it exists independently of the existence or not of true philosophies, and constitutes the rule for evaluating the various forms in which reason relates to the infinite object, a relationship which is, in turn, always limited and incomplete. The “philosophical characteristic” thus rises up as the criterion (*zur Richtschnur*) of the historical “characteristic”.

Schlegel deals with the two forms of characteristic, the philosophical and the historical, separately: *Charakteristik der verschiedenen Arten von Philosophie und ihrer Verhältnisse zueinander* (pp. 115–162); and *Historische Charakteristik der Philosophie nach ihrer sukzessiven Entwicklung* (pp. 163–323). If we consider the statements of principle, the philosophical characteristic seems to be privileged, since it is given a primacy which we do not find in the treatment of the historical characteristic. The two forms respond to independent and completely different criteria of analysis; any connections, if they do exist, are rare and fragmentary, and the best and most interesting results, even from the philosophical point of view, are to be found from the point of view of the historical characteristic.

The various types of philosophy are set out in the following order, from the lowest to the highest: empiricism, materialism, scepticism, pantheism, and idealism. Another system, intellectual dualism, is then added as the form of transition from pantheism to idealism. Empiricism, which limits knowledge to the ambit of the experience of the senses, corresponds to a condition in which the spirit and customs are relaxed, and it cannot therefore avoid the contradictions that lead to its destruction; from empiricism we necessarily move to materialism and scepticism, therefore. Schlegel is willing to grant scepticism a certain importance because of its critical function and because it creates a consciousness of the impossibility of bringing philosophy to a state of completeness.

There is a long discussion and analysis of the pantheistic form of philosophy, not so much the pantheism defined as mystic and religious and typical of Oriental philosophy, but rather the philosophical and systematic formulation of pantheism given by Spinoza, which was then at the centre of debate. The distinction between these two types of pantheism is at the same time the discriminating factor between forms of false philosophy (empiricism, materialism, and scepticism) and the forms of true philosophy (pantheism, intellectualism, and idealism). Spinoza’s pantheism is also called realism, since it is based on the concept of substance or thing which, taken in a speculative sense, ends up by denying the living being and becoming. The

criticism of realistic pantheism, as in Jacobi, therefore, involves rationalism as such because it is based on pure reason, a theoretically empty faculty, incapable of determining reality if not in a negative sense: "Pantheism finally has its origin exclusively in pure reason, in so far as the principle of identity, the negative concept of the infinite, is its first and only founding principle" (p. 161).¹³

The transition from pantheism to idealism is mediated by intellectual dualism, the greatest expression of which is found in Platonism. By viewing the spirit as non-productive intellect, rather than going to the root of the intellect itself, Plato was led to admit the existence of eternal matter. Idealism arises by overcoming this, and considers as truly real and productive only that which is spiritual. At the pinnacle of this perspective is the thought of Fichte, preceded by Aristotle in Antiquity and by Leibniz and Kant in the modern age. But not even idealism is a complete philosophy because of its inability, even in its most elevated version (Fichte's), to explain the origin and essence of matter. The frequent references, both in the systematic and the historical part, to Jacob Böhme, whose system is defined as magical idealism, seems to indicate F. Schlegel's philosophical orientation in this period, that is to say, the development of Fichtian idealism towards the search for a non dualistic connection between the finite and the infinite.¹⁴

¹³ Schelling was to respond in the same period to Schlegel's interpretation of pantheism, which (because of its implicit fatalism) is basically critical of both of the forms put forward, and, like Schlegel, he defines Spinoza's pantheism as "realism"; cf. G. Riconda, *Schelling storico della filosofia* (Milan, 1990), pp. 170–180. Schelling criticises Schlegel's famous work on the wisdom of the Indians: *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier. Ein Beitrag zur Begründung der Alterthumskunde*, Heidelberg, 1808 (now in *Kritische Ausgabe*, VIII, pp. 105–433). The work is made up of three parts, on the language, philosophy, and historical ideas, but in the *Vorrede* the language is recognised as the principal cause of Schlegel's interest, and he refers to the work of his friend Alexander Hamilton on Sanscrit. Linguistics has the task of showing how the many Indoeuropean languages derived from the original language; in the same way the historian of philosophy has to reconstruct the process that led to the misunderstanding and distortion of the truth. The "wisdom" of the Indians is the clearest demonstration of this distancing of man from original revelation under the guidance of reason. The most ancient system, the closest to the truth, is the system of emanation, which gave rise to materialism and, in opposition to it, dualism. Because of its inability to explain the existence of the negative principle, dualism inevitably degenerated into pantheism, which with its idea of the One-Everything obscured the sentiment for the infinite definitively. Pantheism therefore represents the moment of the greatest misunderstanding of revelation and at the same time the transition of philosophy from the East to the West. This work on India marked Schlegel's emotional break with the East, and soon afterwards he converted to Catholicism. On the evolution of F. Schlegel's relationship with the East, with his transition around 1802 to a veneration of the Greeks, to his veneration or rather mania for the Indians, whose language and literature he studied, see R. Gérard, *L'Orient et la pensée romantique allemande* (Paris, 1963), pp. 84–128; see in particular Schleiermacher's negative judgement in a letter to Schlegel, where he demonstrates his dissatisfaction with the work on the wisdom of the Indians from a philosophical point of view and admits that he expected more from a historical and philological point of view too, given the length and depth of his friend's studies on the type of literature (p. 120)..

¹⁴ Cf. C. Ciancio, *Friedrich Schlegel. Crisi della filosofia e rivelazione* (Milan, 1984), p. 132. Heß has a different interpretation of this work and speaks not of the development but the rejection of Fichte's idealism. He sees the work as evidence of the crisis that was to lead F. Schlegel's conversion to Catholicism; cf. Heß, *Das romantische Bild der Philosophiegeschichte*, pp. 280–281.

The “historical characteristic” enjoys a certain autonomy within the ambit of criticism. Indeed, “it not only has to do with the characteristic, description, and representation of an object”, but it also “attempts to reach the beginning, the origin of the thing and to explain its genesis (*Entstehen*)” (p. 163). As far as the first point is concerned, what (*Was*) the object is, historical analysis depends on criticism; when it comes to how (*Wie*) it originated, on the other hand, it is relatively autonomous. Criticism is in practice autonomous, even though Schlegel does not recognise it theoretically. At the beginning of the historical part he strives to show how the historical development of philosophy corresponds to the natural development of thought: scepticism and materialism “naturally” arise first, followed by pantheism, dualism, and idealism in that order. But this order is completely absent in the course of the historical part, which instead presents a series of results and judgements which are clearly in contrast with the theoretical part. We can take as an example the extremely positive opinion of Plato, clearly the favourite compared with Aristotle; but Aristotle should be favoured on a theoretical level because idealism is better than dualism (and Aristotle is an idealist according to Schlegel). Another obvious contradiction concerns empiricism, which is the most immediate and superficial, to such an extent that Schlegel sometimes excludes it from philosophy. For this reason, empiricism should be found at the beginning of historical evolution, while it is practically absent from the section on the most ancient Greek philosophy and is characteristic of the philosophy closest to us, from Descartes to Kant. The “how” a philosophy arises and develops is only correctly “characterized” on a historical level; as regards scholastic philosophy, for example, Schlegel observes that it is identical to Patristic philosophy as far as its object, but it can be understood specifically only if set in a historical context, when, that is, the link between philosophy and culture, language, art, society, and the political forms of the middle ages are shown (cf. pp. 241–242).

As Schlegel proceeds, the historical characterization becomes less a philosophical discipline and takes on the form of all the other types of historiography, basing itself exclusively on critical and philological tools. To confirm this, we can take some of the themes dealt with by Schlegel, from among many, for their relevance to the historiography of philosophy of the period. The first concerns the origin of philosophy, which can also be dealt with from the speculative (*speculativ*) or the historical (*historisch*) point of view. On one hand, we can say what philosophy is, derive the idea of the necessary imperfection of all philosophical research from the definition, and show the different types of possible system, but we will still know nothing about their effective origin, or how one doctrine is connected to another and originates from it. The historical approach not only puts us in contact with the reality of philosophy, but, observes Schlegel, now inverting the original relationship between philosophical criticism and the historical characteristic, it makes it easier to resolve the speculative question surrounding the origin of philosophizing (p. 171).

The starting point is Greek thought because of the great affinity which Schlegel, not unlike his friends at the “Athenäum”, saw it had with the most recent German philosophy (p. 170). By placing Greek philosophy at the centre, two historically relevant questions arise, both connected to the relationship between Greek and

Oriental thought and modern philosophy. On the first point, F. Schlegel has a solution which is innovative compared to previous and contemporary historiography: he sets himself the task of demonstrating the oriental origin (Indian in particular) of the most important part of Greek philosophy: Pythagorean and Platonic thought. Historians have so far been rightly held back, he observes, by the lack of sufficient authentic documents to support the oriental influence on Greek philosophy; the work of Anquetil-Duperron and modern translations of Indian religious and philosophical works have publicized ideas and opinions that can be considered philosophical, both from the point of view of the content and the form, and which appear to be connected in such a way as to constitute a true philosophical system. The fundamental doctrines of this system are to be found in Pythagorism (metempsychosis) and Platonism (the doctrine of ideas and reminiscence), paradoxical and alien doctrines, both for the Greeks and for us, but which were the “dominant tendency for the Indians” (p. 173).

Greek and Oriental thought, therefore, can be taken as a unit. But there is a real fracture between Antiquity and the modern age, on the other hand, which, for Schlegel, show two radically different philosophical attitudes, both as to their method (or form) and their content (in relation to life). Ever since the most ancient times, Greek philosophy was linked to poetry and art, and it maintained a “dialectic and rhetorical form”. Modern philosophy, on the other hand, originated from scholasticism, and kept its dry scientific form (*die scholastische, trocken wissenschaftliche Schulform*). From the point of view of form, Greek thought is clearly superior to modern: “Compared to the beautiful, poetic, dialogical clarity, the sharpness and artistic nature of the development of their thoughts, the strength and vivacity of their expression, the beauty and elegance of their style, the philosophical method linked to profundity and scientific precision which are proper to the Greeks, there is nothing more different than that merely regular, arid, absolutely abstract and dead form of the Scholastics, who only cared about the most rigorous scientific consequence, set out their thoughts and their ideas with the most scrupulous systematic consequentiality in an artificial, excessively refined, always unpleasant, dead, often obscure and confused language” (pp. 175–176).

The difference in content is no less radical. Greek philosophy always had an immediate relationship with life, had a definite moral and political end, and its exponents were princes, politicians, legislators, and teachers. Modern thought, from the scholastics onwards, was limited to an abstract aim, namely, the foundation of philosophy from a formal point of view, as a science. The supremacy awarded again to the Greeks is only mitigated by a recognition of the scientific value that modern philosophy can attain, at least potentially: “Withdrawing from external action, scholastic philosophy gained time and strength to devote itself more to its internal perfection as a science. This took place principally in the highest and most fitting elaboration of the most rigorous, consequent, and systematic *form*, to which it applied itself. However, because of this perfection of its form, to which it gave the greatest attention, the form finally became predominant; philosophy degenerated into pedantry, pure formulary, and empty words of the schools, and it lost all its vital energy and all its effectiveness” (p. 179).

There are two periods in the history of philosophy, therefore, ancient (Greek), and modern, just as there are two periods in the history of art and literature, the classical and the romantic.¹⁵ The ancient period begins with pre-Socratic philosophy, reaches its apogee with Plato, and ends with the Alexandrine philosophers; the modern period goes from the Scholastics up to modern philosophy properly speaking and contemporary German idealism. Scholastic thought of the Middle Ages thus acquires a historically important function as the period of transition between the two periods. All the previous philosophies, observes Schlegel, served as an “aspiration and a striving towards the truth”; scholasticism, on the other hand, undertook the task of “preserving and explaining the truth”, aware “of having found the truth accepted by everyone undoubtedly and universally” (p. 242). In this way, philosophy began to be treated as a science, a characteristic of the modern age.

Each period has its own dynamic and its own development. Greek philosophy is divided into two epochs, the Greek and the Alexandrine. The Greek period is progressive, “the period of the earliest invention, the freest and most independent activity and development” (p. 243). Standing out among the isolated, one-sided research of the pre-Socratics, is the attempt by the Pythagorean school to create “a scientific construction of the world” (p. 187), and its tendency to give philosophical reflection a political, educational aim. Socrates took up these tendencies to make philosophy “a practical science of life” (p. 200), and with his dialectic Plato provided the highest form of this wisdom. Greek philosophy began to decline with the objective idealism of Aristotle, based not on the doctrine of knowledge but on the theory of nature (which nevertheless had the characteristic of independence - *Selbstätigkeit* - that the most recent subjective idealism [Fichte] attributed to consciousness: p. 228), a decline which corresponded to an increase in erudition. Alexandrine philosophy, within which Schlegel places the Neoplatonists and the Fathers of the Church, was marked by the prevalence of erudition over speculation, and its philosophy was

¹⁵ Cf. F. Schlegel, *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur*, in *Kritische Ausgabe*, VI, pp. 1–420. This work on literature has many themes in common with the work on philosophy analysed here. In the first place, from the *Vorrede* onwards, the central theme is the study of the effects of literature on life, and there is a criticism of literature, above all German literature, for its indifference to the problems of the nation. The golden age of Greek literature was between Solon and Alexander the Great, and the greatest philosophers are considered to be Plato and Aristotle, equally great and representatives of two different models of philosophical literature: Plato the rhetorical and dialectic, and Aristotle the systematic and scientific. We see a more decisive change in historiographical judgement in the context of medieval and modern thought (*Die Entwicklung der Philosophie* dates to 1806, while the first redaction of the *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur* dates to 1812; between these two dates, in 1808, Schlegel converted to Catholicism). Scholastic philosophy is partly seen in a new positive light due to the little bit of Christianity that penetrated it. An entire lecture is devoted to the theme of the influence of the Lutheran Reformation on philosophy (a classic topic of modern historiography of philosophy, but which had not been touched on in the *Die Entwicklung der Philosophie*): for Schlegel it had a negative influence because it led to the decline of “Oriental Platonic philosophising” which had become established in Italy and Germany, and because it favoured the return of Scholasticism (Melancthon). Finally, there is criticism of Kant and the more recent philosophy of idealism (Fichte), and the work of Schlegel’s friend Novalis is indicated as the best development in German thought (p. 400).

“pure syncretism” (p. 236). But the same period is also judged less negatively¹⁶: if it is characterized as being repetitive from a philosophical point of view, from a historical standpoint it is considered to be “the age of the greatest and most impetuous ferment of all the highest ideas known, of a seeking and tending towards revelation and concerning revelation, on its authenticity and how it can be explained. It was a time of oscillation between different traditions which passed themselves off as revelations, a struggle between old and new ideas, in short, a time of philosophical and religious revolution in which a new world was formed” (p. 243).

The second period in the history of philosophy is divided into three ages, represented by the scholastics, the mystics, and the modern philosophers properly speaking. The characteristics of scholasticism can be found in all these philosophies, even in those which opposed it. The first phase of modern thought is effectively dominated by an opposition to scholasticism and it is made up of three components; mysticism (Böhme), polemic (Bayle), and philology (Marsilio Ficino). Greatest importance is given to the so-called mystics, and Böhme in particular, who seems to have reached that philosophical ideal that Schlegel himself inspired to, both in form and content: his thought, Schlegel observes, is religious, the content philosophical, and the spirit poetic, and he has managed to join the systems of Pantheism, realism, and idealism into a harmonious whole (p. 257).

Modern philosophy properly speaking is more closely linked to scholasticism; it is like the art of reason (*Vernunftkunst*), and it aspires to a method (*Streben nach Methoden*). This regards the form which is scholastic; its content, on the other hand, tends to syncretism. The most original thinkers did not so much found schools (rationalism: Descartes; empiricism: Locke; idealism: Kant) as continue them, in particular Spinoza and Leibniz for the Cartesians and Fichte for the Kantians. Fichte represents the pinnacle of modern thought for having perfected the method and the form in an “absolutely philosophical” way (p. 292) by affirming the independence of philosophy from all other forms of knowledge.

Within this general picture, the interpretation of Plato is worth considering in its own right, both for the amount of space it takes up compared with the rest of the other topics (pp. 207–226) and above all for the importance it held for Schlegel and for his contemporaries. Plato is the most important philosopher of all, an authentic model to aspire to: “The inexhaustible profundity, richness, quantity, and sublimity of his ideas, the extraordinary heights reached by his thought, but more than anything the absolutely original perfect art and beauty of his expression, the authentically classical excellence and exemplary nature of his style distinguish him from among all his predecessors and followers, and gained him the admiration of the first thinkers of all times and nations (p. 207).

If, Schlegel repeats, philosophy is not a science, but an aspiration to science by thinking on one’s own in communion with others (*das gemeinschaftliche Selbstdenken*, that is to say, *Symphilosophieren*), we have to recognise that Plato

¹⁶ Cf. on the other hand the distinction between Alexandrine and Patristic philosophy, and the consequently different judgement (negative for the Alexandrine philosophy and positive for the Patristic), in Schleiermacher and Ritter: below, pp. 67 and 106–110.

performed this task better than everyone else, using dialectic and dialogue as the characteristic forms of his writing, which therefore contain “only a philosophy” and not “a system”, expressing an “incessant striving” towards science and not “a complete science”. Given that the value of Plato’s philosophy (like that of every other philosophy) lies in its form rather than its content, in man’s aspiration to the infinite rather than in the partial results of this aspiration, Schlegel introduces the problem of the evolution of Plato’s thought, which was to become one of the central problems of historiography: “The philosophy of a man is the history of a spirit (*die Geschichte eines Geistes*), the gradual origin, formation, and proceeding of his ideas. As soon as he has finished thinking and has reached a certain result a system arises; if the philosopher has a certain quantity of definitive results to set out, he can choose the form of a closed system; but if what he has to say is more than what can be contained in this form, he cannot contain the richness and the multiplicity of his ideas within these limits. If then the constant development and perfecting of his opinions do not allow him to close the series of his philosophical investigations, he can only try to grasp in the development and expression of his ideas that inner connection (*inneren Zusammenhang*), that peculiar unity, in which we must search for the highly objective value of Plato’s work. Only in the precise and organic process (*Fortschreiten*) of his philosophical investigation, and not in the stable principles or results that were obtained at the end do we find the great unity that characterises the form of his philosophy” (p. 209).

The unity of Plato’s thought, therefore, lies in its form and not in its content or in the system, and the form is the process which characterises the course (*Gang*) of the dialogues, both individually and taken together. In each of these dialogues Plato reaches the threshold of the absolute but cannot pass it, and he limits himself to “alluding in an imprecise way to the absolute, to the divine, to that which cannot be indicated or explained philosophically” (p. 210). The absence of a systematic form is compensated for by a thoroughly artistic form of expression and an internal coherence which render the dialogue philosophical. The coherence derives from the constant reference to the absolute and the urgent need to grasp it; the art, on the other hand, is linked to an awareness of the impossibility of representing the absolute (*Undarstellbarkeit*) and the consequent use of a large variety of expressions to make up for the inadequacy of thought. Indeed, Plato expresses himself using rhetoric, dialectic, mathematics, politics, physical poetics, or following the mystery religions on the basis of the “continual aspiration” (*ein fortgehendes Streben*) “to represent and explain the infinite with increasingly clear and accurate words, expressions, and formulae” (p. 214).

In this context, two typically philological problems take on an essential importance for the interpretation of Plato’s philosophy: the first concerns the so-called “unwritten doctrines”, and the second the authenticity and the order of succession of the dialogues. The reference to the “unwritten doctrines”, which some scholars

appeal to today to put forward a new “paradigm” for interpreting Platonism,¹⁷ is taken by Schlegel to be a current and traditional opinion, which centres on the need to find a Platonic system. Up until now, he observes, “we have accepted the theory that the dialogues do not contain all of his philosophy, that we only possess his exoteric philosophy, and that besides this he also had a secret doctrine that he did not formulate in his writings” (p. 211). But Schlegel immediately confutes the reasons in favour of this opinion: it is not true that Plato uses a certain restraint in talking about religious beliefs, but he long contested mythology, which he contrasted with the doctrine of the unity of God; the dialogue is not an expedient to mask a system, but rather it is the system which is incompatible with the creation of Plato’s philosophy; the alleged book entitled “unwritten doctrines” which has been lost, is not by Plato, but if anything by his closest followers, Speusippus and Xenocrates, who were notoriously unable to understand Plato’s teaching. Concluding, Schlegel states that, although they do not present anything definite and concrete, the dialogues contain all Plato’s entire teaching. “We have enough reasons to believe that in his writings we possess Plato’s authentic philosophy; but the fact that the dialogues do not offer anything absolutely complete is in the nature of things, because Plato as an absolutely progressive thinker (*progressiver Denker*) never reached the point of concluding either his philosophy or the description of it. To counter the dogmatic attempt to hurriedly find the system, the most fruitful and instructive obstacle is undoubtedly the sceptical spirit, gradually forming his dialogues” (p. 212).

An examination of the authenticity of the dialogues and a study of their succession serves not merely as an introduction to Plato’s philosophy but it is a crucial part of any consideration of it. F. Schlegel takes his arguments mainly from the contents, while his observations on the style and the language are relevant, but fragmentary and indecisive. There are only a few dialogues considered to be authentic and complete, a lot fewer than those being translated by Schleiermacher in the same period. The *Parmenides*, which has a central place in this translation, is considered by Schlegel to be incomplete (because Plato himself wanted it so), as are the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*. Schlegel views as spurious the books of the *Laws*, because they contain “ideas that do not agree with the philosophy of Plato”, and for the same reason so are the *Cratylus* and most of the short moral dialogues; he also raises serious doubts over the *Symposium* and the *Meno*. As for the *Timaeus*, only the introduction and some other brief passages are recognized as authentic, while most of the dialogue is attributed to Plato’s pupils. Schlegel then turns to the problem of the order of the dialogues: “Since the main thing in an absolutely progressive philosophy is the gradual development and perfecting of the system of thought, in order to be able to see the connection of everything, it is necessary to have found the order in which the dialogues follow on from one another, since if they are taken on their

¹⁷For an overview of the question G. Reale, *Per una nuova interpretazione di Platone. Rilettura della metafisica dei grandi dialoghi alla luce delle «Dottrine non scritte»* (Milan, 1986). On relations between Schlegel and Schleiermacher over the translation of Plato, cf. Dilthey, II/I, pp. 678–683.

own they often leave much that is obscure and only a complete vision of the whole can facilitate a correct understanding of them" (p. 213). He proposes the following order: the *Phaedrus*, the *Parmenides*, *Protagoras* (if it is authentic), the *Gorgias*, *Cratylus* (if it is by Plato), the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist*, the *Politics*, the *Phaedo*, the *Philebus*, the *Republic*, and then a fragment of the *Timaeus* and a fragment of the *Critias*.

All of the observations made so far have to do with the form of Plato's philosophy, by virtue of which Plato represents "an unsurpassable model" (*unübertroffene Muster*). When we move on to examine the contents, Schlegel's enthusiasm is less evident. He no longer speaks of Plato's philosophy in terms of originality or as a model, and he considers it rather traditionally as an attempt to find a mid-way position (*Mittelphilosophie*) between the opposing points of view of Heraclitus and Parmenides, by using the teachings of Anaxagoras and Socrates. Schlegel believes there is a fundamental error at the basis of Plato's thought: the fact that Plato admits the existence of original matter gives the system a rigidly dualistic nature, and Schlegel defines this dualism as "intellectual" and considers it to be a form of idealism *manqué*. "Plato looked for the middle way [between Heraclitus and Parmenides] in the right place, in idealism, but his idealism remained incomplete; the reason for this was not only the purely negative attempt to avoid the errors of the two opposing systems, but also to have understood the character of the supreme consciousness right from the start in an excessively unilateral way, not in its first original form. Plato was right to give primacy to the spirit and to intelligence rather than the body, to raise the spirit to become a first principle, searching for the source of all existence in the consciousness; but he understood this consciousness only as intellect or reason; intellect and reason are derived, developed, artificial forms of consciousness, but certainly not the root, the original source of it" (pp. 216–217). Schlegel finds the original source which Plato was not able to find by turning not to the great "idealists" of the time, Fichte and Schelling, but to Jacob Böhme: "A philosophy like that of J. Böhme, which understood the original principle to be nostalgia (*Sehnen*), or love (*Liebe*), will itself produce life, will, with its productive magic force, arouse new forces in the consciousness, since it has understood the consciousness itself in its highest and most lively force" (p. 225).

If we follow Schlegel's interpretation, we may well come to doubt Plato's speculative ability. He fell behind not only Böhme, but also Indian thought, from which he took many of his doctrines, such as metempsychosis, the theory of ideas, and reminiscence. Indian philosophy in fact has a higher concept of God, "not only a living animal, as he was among the ancient Greek philosophers, but rather as a spirit, an *I* in which the dominant element is the spiritual. But not only as a perfect intellect as he was in Plato, but as the totality of all forces and material essences, and at the same time as the source of every living thing, from whose fullness and strength all things derive and develop" (p. 221). Plato's originality, therefore, does not emerge from his attempt to construct a system, but from the way in which he took other people's doctrines and the form he gave to them; his originality, we have seen, lies not in the system but in the philosophical language and style, and it is therefore determined on the basis of a historiographical method of a philological or

“aesthetic” type, which is also how “pre-romantic” or “romantic” historiography was defined (cf. Heß, *Das romantische Bild der Philosophiegeschichte*, pp. 252–254). The result of the two forms of “characteristic”, the philosophical and the historical, is therefore different: the philosophical characteristic not only leads us to deny the philosophical importance of Platonism, but it is unable to grasp its particular character and its undeniable historical significance, which is evident, on the other hand, in all its originality and importance in the context of the historical characteristic. The two types of procedure are independent and difficult to reconcile, despite Schlegel’s conviction that the philosophical characteristic can serve as a guide for historical analysis. If anything the opposite is true, as we can deduce from the conclusion to the chapter on Plato: “Despite these shortcomings, the foundation of which we have explained, Plato has first place among original thinkers (*unter den Selbstdenkern*) of all times and nations; he is both a source and a model for us (*Quelle zugleich und Urbild*), a model for the great excellence of his style and form, a source because he leads us into the spirit of the philosophemes of his predecessors better than anyone else” (p. 225).

(d) *Schleiermacher’s plan for historiographical research*

Schleiermacher’s work on the history of philosophy follows a precise plan, which starts with a series of works on individual points of Greek thought and finally leads to an overall history of ancient and modern philosophy, published posthumously by Ritter. In practice, right from the start, in the planning and writing stage of his essay on Heraclitus, while he was translating Plato’s dialogues (the translation of the *Cratylus* dates to 1806), Schleiermacher was aware of the problem of the whole into which the thought of each philosopher had to be placed. Indeed, in the period 1806–1807, he gave a course on the history of Greek philosophy, initially to be held in Halle, but which was moved to Berlin because of the war (the battle of Jena took place in 1807), a course which had great repercussions in the culture of the age, and was repeated on more than one occasion in the years that followed.¹⁸

Schleiermacher claimed his own Heraclitus to be superior to that of Creuzer (which Hegel preferred to refer to), because he had placed him within the context of an overall vision of Greek philosophy, even though, he observed, this vision could not explicitly appear given the place in which the essay appeared, namely Wolf and Buttmann’s journal the “Museum der Alterthumswissenschaft”. Schleiermacher’s work was in fact of a philological type, and, as the title explains,¹⁹ limited itself to reconstructing

¹⁸ Cf. G. Moretto, ‘L’Eraclito di Schleiermacher’, in *Atti del Symposium Heracliteum 1981*, a cura di L. Rossetti, II: *La ‘fortuna’ di Eraclito nel pensiero moderno* (Rome, 1984), p. 87. On Schleiermacher’s philosophy lectures (held as secretary of the philosophical section of the Academy of Sciences, as he held the chair of theology) cf. H.J. Birkner, ‘Schleiermacher maestro di filosofia’, in *Schleiermacher filosofo*, ed. by H.J. Birkner, H. Kimmerle, and G. Moretto (Naples, 1986), pp. 15–35.

¹⁹ F. Schleiermacher, ‘Herakleitos der dunkle, von Ephesos, dargestellt aus den Trümmern seines Werkes und den Zeugnissen der Altern’, *Museum der Alterthumswissenschaft*, I (1807), pp. 315–533, then in Id., *Sämmtliche Werke*, III/2 (Berlin, 1838), pp. 1–146 (the edition used here).

Heraclitus's doctrine on the basis of the remains of his work and the ancient witnesses. Nevertheless, philology is understood here in a more "profound" sense than the traditional one, as Boeckh suggested in a letter dated 9 February 1808, speaking of Schleiermacher's Heraclitus and referring to concepts he had learnt from him.²⁰

In a letter to his friend Brinkmann dated 14 December 1803, Schleiermacher had recognized "in that higher sense" in which it was understood by Schelling and F. Schlegel, that philology was "the only field in which I could make some contribution to the world", adding that, despite the fact that his ideas were not as vast and his construction not as ambitious as those of Schelling and Schlegel, what he had produced was "perhaps in some way more skilful and more fruitful". The fruitfulness of the work is due to connection between that "superior philology" that was dominated by philosophy and the "inferior philology" linked to the concrete work of the historian. "Superior philology" is abstract: "This superior philology has no other basis than inferior philology, in such a way that without a thorough competence in this, superior philology is impracticable; it may be very true, but it will be impossible to demonstrate this truth, and it continually runs the risk of having its constructions being considered simple castles in the air".²¹ Though he accepts (F. Schlegel and Novalis's) principle of connecting it to philosophy, Schleiermacher defends the independence of philology, and far from making it a simple surrogate of philosophy, he takes it as a tool that renders philosophy concrete and real. Philology therefore is philosophy for Schleiermacher too, but not in the sense of the organization and deduction of its contents from higher abstract truths, but rather, as has been cleverly said, in the sense of the "auscultation of the glory of being in the individual" (Moretto, *Etica e storia in Schleiermacher*, p. 336), not on the basis of logical categories but the hermeneutical category of understanding.

Schleiermacher had no intention of limiting himself to the simple field of erudition. It was his intention, instead, as we can see from the first words of his essay on Heraclitus, to open himself up to the historical and philosophical dimension, to illustrate "the wisdom of this man" in his true essence and range (*ihren Wesen und Umfange nach*). This task meant rejecting the "dangerous audacity of conjectures and connections", which derives from the strong desire to discover more than we know about Heraclitus. Philology is an essential tool in historical and philosophical criticism. Even though he has begun with the greatest care, warns Schleiermacher, the scholar "must nevertheless remain bound with the strongest chains to the immediate fact (*mit den festesten Ketten an das unmittelbar gegebene*), prudently considering this too on the basis of its different value" (Schleiermacher, *Herakleitos der dunkle*, p. 3). In the research plan he presented in his Academic memoir on Anaximander, as well as in the *Einleitungen* to his university courses on the history of philosophy (cf. below, pp. 55–65), and in some reflections on the role of philosophy in university reform, Schleiermacher offers some considerations on the way to

²⁰ Cf. Moretto, 'L'Eraclito di Schleiermacher', p. 88.

²¹ *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, ed. by L. Jonas und W. Dilthey, IV (Berlin, 1863; repr. Berlin and New York, 1974), pp. 89–90. Schleiermacher is referring to the problems of translating Plato; cf. W. Dilthey, entry 'Schleiermacher', ADB, XXXI, p. 431.

overcome the antithesis between superior and inferior philology, which basically corresponds to the more well-known and often cited opposition between the two terms, philosophy and history, which constitute the discipline of the history of philosophy.

Schleiermacher's contribution to the work of the Berlin Academy of Sciences began with two memoirs on the history of ancient philosophy, the first on Diogenes of Apollonia (held on 29 January 1811) and the second on Anaximander (11 November 1811). The lecture on Anaximander begins by tackling the problem of the correct way to approach the ancient philosophers, the pre-Socratics in particular. On one hand Schleiermacher recognises the progress made by historical criticism (*die historische Kritik*) and does not fail to cite his predecessors Meiners, Tiedemann, and Tennemann. The art of criticism, however, is not enough. "A lot of fog has been cleared", he states with regard to previous work, "and now it should be easier also to view the objects of more ancient times in their true form"; then adds, "but this very vision, and the description of what has been seen, does not seem to have made as much progress as critical distinction (*die kritische Sonderung*) which undoubtedly had to come first".²²

The "historical vision" (see below, p. 61) or the intuitive image (*ein solches anschauliches Bild*), is not only the result of historical and philological research, but requires the ability to open oneself up to a different world, which must be grasped in its live presence, that is, like a self-sufficient and coherent world in its own right, which has the strength and the ability to reveal it. In order to have access to this world we must create an inter-subjective relationship of a hermeneutical kind, based on the reciprocal relationship between the investigator (the researcher) and the object researched. In the first place the object has to be recognised in its reality and alterity according to what is known in hermeneutics as grammatical interpretation. Applying this rule to the pre-Socratics helps us to outline "a coherent profile of the mentality of an ancient philosopher, and we can clearly recognise the direction of his investigation. The principal results are gathered in natural, necessary connection and we can see the boundaries within which his research had to move" (*Ueber Anaximandros*, p. 172). Schleiermacher specifies further: the attempt to reach objectivity in historiography means "the need to set out the views of the ancients in themselves", avoiding the misunderstanding that arises when they are unduly reduced to our way of judging and philosophizing. The search for objectivity does not just mean the simple empirical description of historical facts, according to the criticism of Hegel and the supporters of 'speculative' historiography. The first fundamental condition of all intersubjective understanding is set out by Schleiermacher in his essay on translation: the subject has to move in order to meet the object, just as the reader has to go "towards the author" and not, vice versa, force the author to move towards the reader and place him in a space and a world that are alien to him.²³

²²F. Schleiermacher, 'Ueber Anaximandros', in *Sämmtliche Werke*, III/2, (Berlin, 1838), pp. 171–172.

²³Cf. F. Schleiermacher, 'Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens', in *Sämmtliche Werke*, III/2, pp. 207–245.

For Schleiermacher, the lack of this caution in the study of the pre-Socratics has distanced us rather than brought us closer to this first philosophy, by considering it “still young and imperfect” and taking it therefore as something incoherent, incomplete, and devoid of unity. But this lack of coherence in the most ancient philosophers, observes Schleiermacher, “could be more valuable for the more complicated speculation of later times, than for the infantile attempts of the early schools, if we can call them such, when philosophy consisted only of the extraordinary clarity of a sense that sees deeply and in which that little that someone could counter as a philosophism to common experience had to be even more necessarily coherent with itself, since everything arose from a single point” (*Ueber Anaximandros*, p. 171). The “historical vision” that Schleiermacher demonstrates in his works on the pre-Socratics (and his translation of Plato) does not exclude a relationship with philosophy, which is the other pole of hermeneutic investigation, represented by the knowledge and the tools possessed by the listener or the reader that enable him to understand the message contained in the discourse and to create a communicative relationship with the author. Philosophy is in a circular relationship with its history, a hermeneutical relationship in which one can be understood on the basis of its opening to the other; it is a relationship in which the totality, which is both the precondition and point of arrival of understanding, is indicated as the object and the aim of historiography more than philosophy. This relationship also affects the way in which we conceive of philosophy, which should not be understood dogmatically or systematically, not in a Kantian sense as an apodictic form of knowledge, nor in the Hegelian sense of an absolute system linked to categories which, because of their characteristic of necessity, are only apparently historical, but in reality derive from the unchangeable laws of logic. In both cases, history is subordinate to theory and the philosopher insists on guiding the historian in his work of analysis and judgement on one hand, while on the other he also claims the right to elaborate the speculative contents independently.

It would not be entirely correct to explain Schleiermacher’s position as a polemical reaction to the affirmation of the speculative approach to historiography which was a consequence of the rise of Hegel’s philosophy. In reality Schleiermacher worked on the nature and the aims of the history of philosophy independently, and his work was a response not only to his own speculative concerns, but also to a clear cultural policy, which was supported, among others, by Wilhelm von Humboldt, the Prussian minister of education and founder of the University of Berlin. It was not by chance that Schleiermacher began his collaboration with the Berlin Academy of Sciences with an essay on ancient philosophy *Ueber Diogenes von Apollonia* (*Sämmtliche Werke*, III/2, pp. 149–170). His choice was justified by reflection on the aim and the nature of philosophy and the pre-eminence of work in the field of the history of philosophy. It would seem, observed Schleiermacher, that essays for the philosophical class of the Academy were obliged to deal with the “domain of the highest and most general transcendental and metaphysical speculation”, since the other classes have rightly affirmed themselves in the various fields of philology, history, natural science, and mathematics, and they strive not only to thoroughly penetrate their own sciences, but also to ascend to the highest principles on which they

are based. But philosophical speculation is not in itself a field worthy of a member of the Academy.

At this point, Schleiermacher describes the work of the “pure philosopher” in strictly negative terms. Speculation is in fact a thoroughly solitary job (*ein ganz einsames Geschäft*); like the poet in his ‘enthusiasm’, the philosopher does not accept advice nor is he held to accept any. As a member of the Academy, Schleiermacher declares therefore that he cannot indulge in “speculative exercises”, that he prefers “other research”, and that he wishes to descend “from that supreme domain of general speculation” and enter the field of history, aware of the danger of invading the space of the other classes: “We miserable ones who would like to communicate other research here, with which we have descended only slightly from that supreme domain of general speculation, have, in order to further promote it, thus become lost in the space of the natural or the historical sciences, and we find ourselves in the dangerous situation of being identified and cast out by the other classes. Our own domain is like a thin boundary (*Grenzrain*) between two large fields, where, especially when the ground is slippery, it is impossible to stop without sliding from one side to the other; and the more carefully the neighbouring fields have been cultivated the more easily forbidden footprints are discovered, even if they have not trodden on anything. Therefore, I urge you, at least for now and for the future, that I be allowed to settle more in the historical domain which is closest to me (*auf dem mir zunächst liegenden geschichtlichen Gebiet anzusiedeln*), as long, naturally, as I strive to grow something useful and damage only what I recognise to be weeds. In this way I can patiently wait and accept that, as usually happens, my neighbours will plough the edge of the field and remove that difficult patch of earth from under my feet” (*Ueber Diogenes von Apollonia*, pp. 150–151).

Despite the impression created by the polemical tone and the antithesis between a speculative and a historical consideration of philosophy, Schleiermacher does not conceive of them as mutually exclusive, but in a relationship of continuity and integration. This type of relationship is clearly described in his *Gelegentliche Gedanken über Universitäten*, written several years earlier, in 1808, in the context of a debate on university reform promoted by Wilhelm von Humboldt.²⁴ Schleiermacher divided scholastic and scientific institutions into three levels: schools (gymnasium), the university and the academy. The privileged place for philosophy is the university since its main objective is to arouse the scientific spirit and give it a definite orientation. In the academy, on the other hand, which requires the unification of scientists’ endeavour in order to achieve progress in science, philosophy is merely the

²⁴F. Schleiermacher, ‘Gelegentliche Gedanken über Universitäten in deutschem Sinn, nebst einem Anhang über eine neu zu errichtende’, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, III/1, pp. 535–644. The major exponents of the philosophical culture of the time took part in the debate on the nature and function of the university: Schelling, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Humboldt, and Hegel; cf. a French translation which includes their various contributions: *Philosophies de l’Université. L’idéalisme allemand et la question de l’Université*, ed. by L. Ferry, J.-P. Pesron, and A. Renaut (Paris, 1979); see also L. D’Alessandro, *Stato e università nel pensiero di Schleiermacher. Introduzione a F.D.E. Schleiermacher, “Pensieri occasionali sulla concezione tedesca dell’università”* (Naples, 1984).

common basis that renders their work consistent. “But”, specifies Schleiermacher, “the reason why philosophy slips into the background is that if the sciences must be promoted collectively (*gemeinschaftlich*), according to the method of the academy, everything that concerns the purely philosophical element must be precisely regulated in such a way that there is nothing more to be said about this” (*Gelegentliche Gedanken*, pp. 559–560).

Philosophy does have a place within the academy, and this does not derive from creating new and different systems, but from its pursuit of what is “common” in the philosophies of the past, the element which constitutes the basis of the scientific community. This “affinity” is not an abstract identity set above individuals, but the peculiar link that unites every people to philosophy: “it is precisely this spirit, similar in everyone (*dieser in allen sich ähnliche Geist*), linked to the proper talent of each individual, which makes each person a true member of the association” (*Gelegentliche Gedanken*, p. 557). Each people can correspond therefore to a particular type of philosophy. By turning to that subtle boundary that connects the various forms of scientific research, the member of the philosophical section of the academy comes to favour “this bringing together and agreement with the nation, by means of a historical and critical treatment of the material available” (*Gelegentliche Gedanken*, p. 560).

The way of viewing the relationship between the history of philosophy and philosophy in which history served as a sort of introduction to philosophy is therefore completely turned on its head. Philosophy represents the first, introductory part, and it is always individual and linked to partial perspectives, while the history of philosophy is on a subsequent, higher level, integrating speculative work into the scientific community in accordance with the spirit of the nation. Philosophy only shows its progress in this second direction, in its historical dimension; only by opening itself up to history, in fact, does it demonstrate its validity and effectiveness. Schleiermacher’s choice of philosophical subjects during the course of his collaboration with the Academy responded therefore to these criteria, which directed him on one hand towards the history of ancient philosophy (which was “closest” to him), and, on the other, to the specific field of philosophy, to moral and political themes.²⁵

- (e) *Reflections on the concepts of history and the history of philosophy: W. von Humboldt, Ranke, Brandis, Boeckh*

²⁵ Even the questions opened up as competitions of the philosophical class during the period of Schleiermacher’s presidency were historical and philological: the relationship between Descartes and Spinoza, Aristotle’s logic, the thought of the Pythagoreans; and to this we can add the great undertaking of the critical edition of the works of Aristotle promoted and financed by the Academy (cf. below, note 32). With this type of activity, Schleiermacher attempted to differentiate the task of the Academy from that of the university, even though all the members of the Academy were at the same time also teachers at the University of Berlin by royal decree, in order to avoid possible conflicts between the two institutions; cf. Ch. Bartholmèss, *Histoire philosophique de l’Académie de Prusse depuis Leibniz jusqu’à Schelling, particulièrement sous Frédéric-le-Grand*, II (Paris, 1851), pp. 419–465.

The cultural policy which was at the foundation of the University of Berlin and the role of the Academy of Sciences in this period, is linked in various ways to the new vision of history and the great tasks assigned to historiography by the Romantic movement. Schleiermacher's reflection echoed the ideas of his friend and contemporary Wilhelm von Humboldt, the founder of the University of Berlin and a central figure of German cultural life in the first two decades of the century. Among von Humboldt's most significant writings in this field is a memoir presented to the Prussian Academy of Sciences on 21 April 1821 (and published in the following year): *Ueber die Aufgabe des Geschichtsschreibers*.²⁶ The problem was how to create an independent basis for the science of history. The task of the historian, stated Humboldt, is only apparently receptive: he must certainly limit himself to reporting what happened, but he must also grasp it in its truth. In this way, the historian reveals himself to be creative, like the poet, "not in the sense, of course, that he produces something that does not exist, but rather in the sense that, with his energy [*aus eigener Kraft*], he gives form to that which with mere receptivity he was not able to perceive in its reality" (p. 36). The historian must follow two paths, therefore: the first, of a descriptive nature, aims at gathering the material, and is a minute and impartial investigation of what happened; the second tends towards interpretation, penetrating events and grasping the inner forces or ideas that operate within the facts and that constitute historical truth. The absence or insufficiency of either of these two perspectives produces a partial historiography with extrinsic and superficial descriptions or is guided by an *a priori*, subjective, or arbitrary vision. Neither are able to grasp what is proper to history, which is not the repetitive and the regular but the free, new, and original phenomenon. In order to reach this phenomenon, we have to separate the necessary from the contingent within the mass of events, and identify the real succession and the forces that produced the events themselves.

The truth of history consists in the discovery of the "form" or, according to other expressions used by Humboldt, the "ideas or acting forces". These operate in connection with nature, and not in an abstract or independent way. It is therefore possible to indicate the favourable or unfavourable environmental or geographical conditions, always remembering, however, that, just like organic phenomena, the first orientation of a civilization or a historical cycle is triggered by a spark, an unforeseeable impulse produced by an idea. This is certainly true for Greece, which for Humboldt too was a model for every civilization, but it is also true for all the other civilizations and cultures to have appeared in history, which, as Herder had pointed out, are independent and cannot be compared.

The use of the term 'idea' to define the forces which produce historical events must not lead us to think of these as elements which can be rationally deduced by means of pure thought; the idea always has to be "abstracted" from the events and can be perceived by virtue of the link between the inner and outer part of man, the forces that work within us and external forces. Within this type of relationship,

²⁶ Cf. W. Humboldt, 'Ueber die Aufgabe des Geschichtsschreibers', in Id., *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by the "König. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften", vol. V (Berlin, 1905), pp. 35–56.

which also characterised Schleiermacher's hermeneutics (or more precisely that form of interpretation known as technical or psychological), the historical individual is thought of as something impossible to reduce to abstract or *a priori* categories which belong to the philosophy of history (which both Schleiermacher and Humboldt were hostile to), and at the same time as something independent from the spatio-temporal conditions in which he exists. Any understanding of historical forces in their individuality cannot be derived either empirically or inductively, rationally or by deduction; what is necessary is a sympathetic act of identification, made possible by the unity of the forces that operate inside and outside the subject: "An understanding of anything presupposes as its condition of possibility an analogy between he who understands and the thing that is effectively understood, a previous and original consonance [*eine vohergängige, ursprüngliche Uebereinstimmung*] between the subject and the object [...]. In history this pre-existing foundation of understanding is very clear, in as much as everything that operates in universal history also agitates itself in the depths of man. The more the spirit of a nation is able to profoundly perceive everything that is human and is delicately and purely infected by it in many ways, the more this nation will be destined to produce historians in the true sense of the word" (p. 47).

Humboldt (and Schleiermacher who holds a similar position) can hardly be accused of favouring a type of historiography which is merely descriptive or erudite, or incapable of arriving at the principles which explain the events. Nevertheless, the fact that he places the process of intersubjective understanding, which is always individual and dynamic, at the basis of the intelligibility of a historical fact, leads him to deny the very possibility of a philosophy of history, at least in the sense in which it was understood in the context of idealism, that is to say, as the possibility of rationally deducing historical events from an idea that exists *a priori* and holds regardless of history. It is philology, the true glory of the Germans, and not philosophy, which must guide the work of the historian. Only philology makes it possible to directly approach the past, and render it present, as the historian Barthold George Niebuhr pointed out in the 'Vorrede' to his *Römische Geschichte*: "[Philology] was recognised in its vocation as an intermediary with eternity; for thousands of years it has allowed us to enjoy an uninterrupted identity with the great men and the most noble nations of the ancient world, and through grammar and history it had made us familiar with the products of their genius and the course of their destiny, as if there were nothing separating us from them".²⁷

The early nineteenth-century debate over the relationship between philosophy and history led to the formation of two opposing "schools", one defending philosophy against history (the "historical school" led by Schleiermacher) and the other defending philosophy against history (the "philosophical school" led by Hegel). Defence of one's respective *Weltanschauungen* often degenerated into personal

²⁷ B.G. Niebuhr, *Römische Geschichte*, I (Berlin, 1833⁴), 'Vorrede' [1826], p. x. Niebuhr saw the philology of his time (he cites the family friend Johann Heinrich Voss with particular favour) as the tool of historiography because of its ability to understand the classics as if they were contemporaries.

attacks and contest for academic power. Everyone recognised Schleiermacher as the “philosopher of the historical school”, but the most dynamic and pugnacious member of the group was Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), who, thanks to his longevity and the coherence of his positions, managed to keep the anti-Hegelian controversy alive for over fifty years.²⁸ “History”, states Ranke in a work from the 1830s, is similar to philosophy as it is a science, but it is also an art and hence, as W. von Humboldt had maintained, it is also similar to poetry; but while philosophy and poetry tend towards the ideal, history deals with the real. The object of history is in fact the individual, who has to be recognised according to his own particular nature as an “eternal *quid* who comes from God”. Philosophy, which proceeds deductively and constructively, cannot but misunderstand the value of the individual in himself.²⁹

Ranke’s polemic was aimed primarily at Fichte, but it grew to encompass various plans for a “philosophical construction” of history which were elaborated above all by the Hegelian school. The contrast here, however, was not between philosophy and history, but, as Ranke himself pointed out in another fragment dating to the same period, between “an immature philosophy” and history. History in fact is not opposed in itself to philosophy, but is its necessary complement; indeed, while philosophy deduces a spiritual life by presupposing the need for one, history contemplates the spiritual life and includes it in its concrete appearance and development. A philosophy that claims to interpret historical facts by deriving them *a priori* from its own concept is immature, and hence incomplete. A mature philosophy, on the other hand, reflects the singularity and respects the originality of a historical fact, and is therefore a philosophy based on history.

In the relationship between philosophy and history it is history which predominates. Philosophy in effect is based on a recognition of the fundamental historicity of every spiritual and human manifestation. The categories used to arrive at an understanding of the facts all belong to the domain of history, even those that refer to the general, a general naturally different from that of philosophy, not abstract but concretely realised in individuals. Indeed, if the moment exists, then the totality exists, states Ranke, echoing the themes of Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics. The

²⁸ Cf. E. Simon, *Ranke und Hegel* (Munich and Berlin, 1928), in particular ch. II/3: ‘Die drei Berliner Konflikte zwischen der historischen und der philosophischen Schule’, pp. 79–87. The “political” contrasts were obviously the external expression of the profound difference between the *Weltanschauungen* of the two “opposing parties”; the historical party, Simon explains, “defended the principle of a decentralistic spirit against the centralism of the system” (p. 120). Dilthey, for example, refers to the so-called “historical school” of Niebuhr, Ranke, Savigny, Jakob Grimm, and Boeckh, to justify the need to establish the sciences of the spirit (cf. W. Dilthey, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*, in Id., *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, Stuttgart and Göttingen, 1979, p. xvi). Fueter, on the other hand, does not speak of a “historical school” and has some fundamental reserves about the critical and philological method of Niebuhr, Ranke, and a historiography that he defines as “scientific and erudite” (*die wissenschaftlich-gelehrten Geschichtsschreibung*); cf. E. Fueter, *Geschichte der neueren Historiographie* [1911], 3rd ed. (Munich and Berlin, 1936), pp. 461–466.

²⁹ Cf. L. von Ranke, *Idee der Universalhistorie*, in E. Kessel, ‘Rankes Idee der Universalhistorie’, *Historische Zeitschriften*, CLXXVIII (1954), pp. 290–291.

historian, therefore, has to attempt to connect the facts to reach an understanding of the totality which relives every moment of the process. This is the programme that Ranke aimed to carry out in his long work as a historian and, not by chance, it is mentioned in the *Vorrede* to his last great work, the *Weltgeschichte*, which was published in 6 volumes from 1881 to 1885. The contents of universal history is, in effect, the national history of the various peoples, in each of which the history of humanity appears. "There is a historical life that moves progressively (*fortschreitend*) from one nation to another, from one people to another".³⁰ The same model of hermeneutical circularity, which prescribes deriving an understanding of the universal from a knowledge of the individual, and not proceeding in the opposite direction as the philosophers wanted, is also put forward by Ranke on a methodological level. "Only a history studied critically can be valid as history. The gaze always remains fixed on the universal. But false conclusions are deduced from false premises. Critical research (*die kritische Forschung*) on one hand, and unifying understanding (*das zusammenfassende Verständnis*) on the other, cannot but support one another" (p. 20).

In the perspective of the philosophy of history, which claimed to justify all historical reality rationally, Ranke saw the danger of the very object of historical science disappearing. He protected himself against this, on one hand, by stressing the need for historical and philological documentation, and on the other, by strongly defending the irreducible reality of individual consciousness. Acceptance of this philosophical assumption explains the constant opposition of the historian to the philosophy of history of Hegelian origin: "The fundamental fact in any case is that this conception goes against the truth of the individual consciousness; only the spirit of the world would truly live, only it would be the acting element, even the greatest of men would only be tools in its hands and would undertake things that they neither understand nor want. From this point of view history is precisely a history of the God in becoming; I, for my part, gentlemen, believe in what existed, in what exists and in what will exist, and in the essential immortal nature of individual men, in the living god and the living man".³¹

The person who best interpreted Schleiermacher's position in a theory of the history of philosophy was Christian August Brandis, known above all for his *Handbuch*

³⁰ L. von Ranke, *Historische Meisterwerke*, vol. I: *Weltgeschichte. Die älteste historische Völkergruppe und die Griechen* (Vienna, Zürich, Hamburg, and Budapest, [1928]), p. 19.

³¹ L. von Ranke, *Idee der Universaltheorie*, pp. 306–307.

der Geschichte der Griechisch-Römischen Philosophie.³² After recognising the great interest shown by his age in the history of philosophy, and the history of ancient philosophy in particular (he dedicated his *Handbuch* to Immanuel Bekker, Heinrich Ritter and Friedrich A. Trendelenburg among others), Brandis cites “the unforgettable Schleiermacher” who opened up “a new path for research into the history of philosophy”, a path followed by many others, “among whom Heinrich Ritter with undoubted success” (*Handbuch*, I, ‘Vorwort’, pp. v–vi). The profound agreement between the two is evident from the observations contained in the ‘Vorwort’, above all when Brandis states that historiography should provide the *Verstehen* and not the *Urteilen*, or when he makes teaching (which must always be the aim of historiography) derive from history itself and not from reflections on history.³³

The *Handbuch der Geschichte der Griechisch-Römischen Philosophie* begins with an ‘Einleitung’ which contains a complete albeit brief theory of the history of philosophy. It takes up the major themes of a youthful essay on the “concept of the

³² Christian August Brandis (1790–1867) studied theology, then philology and philosophy at the University of Kiel. After a period in Göttingen and Copenhagen he was invited to Berlin by Niebuhr, where he qualified and began to teach. In 1816 he travelled to Rome as the secretary of the Prussian ambassador. He collaborated with I. Bekker on the edition of Aristotle for the Berlin Academy of Sciences, consulting manuscripts in libraries in Italy, Oxford, and Paris (on the events surrounding the edition of Aristotle, and the commission made up of Bekker, Boeckh, Buttman, and Schleiermacher, and later also Suevern and Brandis, cf. Harnack, pp. 675–677 and 724–725; on p. 1032 see the fundamentally negative opinion on the work carried out by Brandis, concerning the Greek commentators on Aristotle). In 1823 he held his inaugural lecture in Bonn, *De perditis Aristotelis libris de ideis et de bono*. He then interrupted his university activity for a second time in order to visit Greece where he stayed for two and a half years (from 1837), in the retinue of King Otto I of Wittelsbach. His most important work was the *Handbuch der Geschichte der Griechisch-Römischen Philosophie*, 3 parts in 5 volumes, published in Berlin from 1835 to 1866. Brandis also published another work on the same subject which was more complete and easier to use: *Geschichte der Entwicklungen der Griechischen Philosophie und ihrer Nachwirkungen im Römischen Reiche*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1862–1864); see also Brandis, *A Study of the lost books of Aristotle On the ideas and On the good or on philosophy* [1823], ed. and transl. with an introduction by O.F. Summerell (Frankfurt a.M., 2005). His philosophical ideas were greatly influenced by Schleiermacher, whose lectures on the State Brandis published posthumously; cf. ADB, II, p. 245.

³³ C.A. Brandis, *Handbuch der Griechisch-Römischen Philosophie*, I (Berlin, 1835), *Vorwort*, p. VII. The periodization is the same as that used by Schleiermacher and Ritter: the history of Greek philosophy is divided into three periods: the first is preparatory, from the origins to the Sophists; the second, its greatest flowering, from Socrates to Aristotle; and the third its decline, from Epicurus to Neoplatonism. Roman philosophy is placed in this third period, while the Fathers of the Church are not included because they referred to the principle of Christianity and gave rise to a new philosophical world, and are therefore considered by Brandis to be “the foundation and the hinge of the separation between ancient and modern philosophy” (I, p. 52). The culmination of the work is the treatment of Aristotle, which takes up three of the five volumes. After the first volume (1835) on pre-Aristotelian philosophy, the second (1853) and the third volumes (1857) take on the title: *Aristoteles, seine akademischen Zeitgenossen und nächsten Nachfolger*; the fourth volume (1860) again refers to Aristotle in the title: *Uebersicht über das Aristoteles Lehrgebäude und Erörterung der Lehren seiner nächsten Nachfolger, als Uebergang zur dritten Entwicklungsperiode der Griechischen Philosophie*; and finally the fifth volume (1866) refers back to the general title on the frontispiece (this title had appeared on the back of the frontispiece in the other volumes) and it deals with philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman period.

history of philosophy” which Brandis had written at the beginning of his academic career in Berlin (soon interrupted when he took up his post at the Embassy in Rome), and it recasts them in a strongly anti-Hegelian sense.³⁴ The theory centres on the opposition between history and philosophy and the need to find a form of mediation (*eine Vermittelung*), thus removing many of the historian’s prejudices against the philosopher and vice versa, and avoiding those “hostile incursions” into the adversary’s field which each side blames on the other. The first section is devoted to the concepts of history and philosophy. At the centre of the concept of history is the opposition between freedom and necessity. Indeed, some historians explain everything by means of cause and effect, others see the explanation in acts of freedom; only a few, who are divinely inspired (*Gottgeisterten*) manage to understand “the multiple life of freedom in the higher connection of necessity” (pp. 3–4). The greater or lesser importance of these two elements however does not depend only on the historian’s sensibility, but also on the different objects of history; indeed natural history can follow “the path of causality” almost exclusively, while the history of humanity (which Brandis also defines as “the second type or degree of history”) must be open to freedom, albeit with varying degrees of intensity depending on whether it is the history of facts (*Thatengeschichte*) or the history of the sciences (*Geschichte der Wissenschaften*). The first cannot ignore either form of explanation, the external causal (or necessary) form or the internal (or free) form, both because every free action is never “pure in itself” as it is linked to empirical conditions, and because it is a relationship with other actions. There is consequently a continual circular motion (*Kreisbewegung*) between these two forms of causes, one of which is the principle of explanation of the other.

The history of the sciences, which is the history of thought (*Geschichte des Denkens*), seems to exist independently of the empirical causal series, since the spirit turns its attention spontaneously to objects and refers perceptions to a freely chosen unity. In reality, the history of the sciences is also linked to something external, both because perceptions present themselves to the subject as a fact and because the connecting unity is in a certain sense already implied. In practice, in the history of the sciences too we have to admit a circularity (*Kreisbewegung*) between the internal and the external, between freedom and necessity, historical and environmental circumstances and acts of the spirit, albeit with the latter prevalent. This is linked to the intersubjective (hence historical) nature of the individual: “indeed the fact that the individual (*Individuum*) is not alone (*allein*) either in acting or thinking, that in both these activities the liveliest influence of different individuals on each other can be felt, that the spoken word or action, just as they depend on those of others, act in various ways conditioning others in turn, and hence that the series of

³⁴ C.A. Brandis, *Von dem Begriff der Geschichte der Philosophie. Eine Einladungsschrift zu seinen an der Universität in Berlin zu haltenden Vorlesungen* (Kopenhagen, 1815). After a brief introduction, the essay is made up of three parts: I. ‘Von dem Begriff der Geschichte und der Philosophie’, pp. 3–26; II. ‘Von der innern Geschichte der Philosophie’, pp. 27–68; III. ‘Von der äusseren Geschichte der Philosophie’, pp. 69–88; cfr. W.-R. Mann, ‘The Origins of the Modern Historiography of ancient Philosophy’, *History and Theorie*, Mai 1996, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 165–195.

thoughts of the individual is not an absolute expression of the individual, but an act of the spirit that continues to act in this individual (*ein Akt des in diesem Einzelnen fortwirkenden Geistes*), an act that is conditioned and yet free at the same time – all this cannot be denied unless there is a deliberate misunderstanding of the whole of history. It is even more difficult to doubt the fact that what we call the material is variously conditioned by the act of thought. And hence here too we find that external causal link, albeit only indirectly” (pp. 8–9).

The hermeneutical circularity is constituent of both the history of facts and the history of the sciences, in such a way that these two types of history cannot really be separated but only distinguished from one another on the basis of the following criterion: “the history of facts is in the first place and prevalently dependent on that external causal link, and the history of the sciences on the internal one” (p. 11). It is already clear from these words that Brandis has a positive opinion of a historiography based on facts and attention to the historical, temporal dimension of thought, to the point of classifying the sciences according to their order of importance, based on the greater or lesser degree to which they are rooted in history.³⁵ It is in fact possible to distinguish three types of science: a) mathematics, whose development follows a straight line, devoid of deviations (*Ablenkungen*) and marked if anything by interruptions (*Unterbrechungen*), which cannot be explained by external circumstances; b) the natural and experimental sciences, whose development follows a line that is not completely straight (which has deviations) due to its relationship with other sciences, mathematics and philosophy in particular; c) the “sciences of pure reflection, and free reflection”, which are the most prone to change under external influence. “In history”, notes Brandis, “we can perceive not only interruptions but also deviations. They follow the spiral movements of the whole of history much more than the others; and just as on one hand it is more difficult to follow the immutability of the idea in them, so on the other we have to turn for help to the external causal series to be able to adequately penetrate the internal one” (p. 17).

The condition of “internal history” is the development of each science from its own foundation, by a regulative idea (*das Regulativ*) which guides its history; in the case of the history of philosophy the regulative idea will be the very concept of philosophy. Brandis (like Schleiermacher) does not hide the difficulty of such a definition, since the concept of philosophy is formed historically and has therefore been different in different periods; nevertheless, he rejects the two opposite

³⁵ The idea of the centrality of history and its primacy compared with philosophy came to the “generation” of the Romantics (and to Brandis, who was a direct heir of that generation) from a reading of Jacobi’s *Briefe über die Lehre des Spinoza*, which is situated at a point of transition, or “at the threshold”, of the new romantic and idealistic period. Cf. F.H. Jacobi, *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, in Id., *Werke*, ed. by K. Hammacher and W. Jaeschke, vol. I (Hamburg, 1998), pp. 132–134: “And can history - asks Jacobi - ever be anything but a living philosophy? Every philosophy - he replies - expresses the truth of its century and, the more clearly it expresses this truth, the more easily it imposes itself. The subordination of philosophy to history is justified by its inability to draw its own material from itself, material that must be derived from past or present history (but philosophy only judges well around present history). If, therefore, we want to improve the philosophy of an age - Jacobi observes finally - we must improve its history, the form of life proper to the age”

solutions: to take the idea of a certain philosophy, which is the philosophy of our times or our own, because the treatment would become unhistorical (*unhistorisch*); and to avoid any preliminary definition because that would fail to determine the field of investigation. It is necessary, therefore, to define the concept of philosophy without being tied to a precise “philosophical form”, and indicate “the field and the method of science that are at the basis of the philosophy of all ages, leaving history the task of outlining more precisely the various determinations that have been added to the various forms of the concept and describing their relationship” (p. 19).

There is difference, but not opposition, between philosophy and the sciences. The sciences respond to the human spirit’s need to find a single foundation for sensible multiplicity. But the foundation sought and found by the sciences is always conditioned, and so the unsatisfied human spirit turns to an unconditioned cause and unity. “This need”, and here is the definition of philosophy, “to find an unconditioned (*eine unbedingte*) cause and unity for the conditioned causes and unities produces the science of sciences, that is, philosophy” (p. 20). Philosophy is science, but it is not the domination and full possession of its content, which is the absolute, but rather only the need and the demand for it. There are two differences between philosophy and science, therefore: in the first place, the multiple is a given in science, while in philosophy the multiple remains indeterminate and is sought for; philosophy, states Brandis, seeks “an indeterminate multiple” to show “the supreme unity” in it. In the second place, the movement goes in the opposite direction: in the sciences you go from the multiple to unity, while in philosophy from unity to the multiple. Philosophy is therefore, the need (*Bedürfnis*) for absolute unity.

This definition gives us the constituent elements of philosophy which, taken in their different senses, have given rise to the many different philosophies to have appeared in the course of history: the idea of supreme unity, the idea of the multiplicity which lies under it, and the idea of the relationship between them. These characteristics are illustrated more clearly in the *Handbuch*, which gives the following as belonging to the essence of philosophy: 1) the conceptual elaboration of its contents; 2) deduction from principles; 3) systematic connection; and 4) direct or indirect reference to the ultimate foundation of things (*Handbuch*, I, p. 10). Here Brandis quotes Ritter (cf. below, § 2.3.) to stress the need for the historian to use the concept of philosophy and its elements flexibly, and to place the history of philosophy in a wider context, since it often happens that the philosophical spirit of a period is expressed more directly and clearly in art or in religious ideas (cf. *Handbuch*, I, p. 10, where “the immortal poetry of Dante” is taken as an expression of scholastic philosophy and the ideas of Lessing and Hamann prefigure contemporary German thought). The definition of philosophy is only a rule which serves to give unity to historical multiplicity. What should be avoided are the two opposite methods, namely empirical history and the “construction” of history: the former, which aims to safeguard multiplicity, loses sight of unity, while the latter reduces the multiple to the single and hence annuls it. Brandis contrasts these partial approaches with the method of “internal history” which leads us to understand “how the following theories and systems arose from previous ones, in the same way that they themselves,

with their good and bad points, contain the seeds of the development of the most recent research" (I, p. 11).

Before moving on to a more detailed examination of the method of so-called "internal history", Brandis pauses for a moment to examine another approach to the historiography of philosophy that we could define as 'speculative' or '*a priori*' and that he calls the method of the "construction of history". In his 1815 essay the butt of controversy is Karl Leonhard Reinhold (who is also linked to Grohmann, Fries, Bachmann, and Ast), while in the 1835 *Einleitung* to the *Handbuch* the object of his criticism is above all Hegel. Reinhold's idea that a history of philosophy is only possible after a "single philosophy without epithets" (*eine einzige Philosophie ohne Beynamen*; see *Models*, III, p. 771) has been created, and hence only once philosophy has carried out its task and the truth has been revealed, is reductive and wrong from a historiographical and a philosophical point of view. The history of philosophy in this case would be nothing but an uninterrupted series of mistakes and failed attempts, and it would be of little interest and curiosity to a man who by now "moves in the bright light of the truth"; moreover the end of history, thus proclaimed, would condemn philosophy to inactivity and death: "The truth in all its depth and breadth (*Tiefe und Umfang der Wahrheit*) cannot be taken from life nor even from science; and a history that only starts on the condition of reaching this end, without the busy life of history, would have to descend, as an immobile image of it, into the kingdom of death" (*Von dem Begriff*, p. 32).

Before it can be legitimated, the construction method has to resolve two questions, one historical and one philosophical. It is necessary in the first place to show how philosophy itself evolved, independently from external conditions; in the second place it must indicate the changes that have taken place to it as a science, that is to say, the different forms in which the human spirit has realized the idea of philosophy. If we take these forms from a philosophical point of view, that is abstractly, we can see them as particular determinations of the system taken as the criterion of judgement, but we must also decide whether all the possible forms must be deduced from the philosophical idea that we see perfectly implemented in our system, regardless of those that have come into being historically, or whether the possible forms coincide with the real ones. In the first case we would have to admit that the human spirit is definite and definable in its forms, an assumption that contradicts the incommensurable nature of the spirit (*ein nie zu Ermessendes*) and the infinite possible combinations of definite elements. If, on the other hand, we admit the identity of possible forms with the historical forms, it would first be necessary to demonstrate the idea as "something that is real and that effectively contains within it the entire content of history" (p. 36). An answer to the two questions can only be given from a historical point of view; this contradicts the very nature of the construction method, which claims instead to rigorously proceed *a priori*.

This serves to confute Reinhold and the Kantians. In the *Handbuch* on the other hand, the contrast is with Hegel, citing his *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* and the *Einleitung* to his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*. Nowadays, observes Brandis, the attempts at "construction" "are characterized better, as they no longer presuppose that a system is the principle of

historical development, however important Kant's system was, but they hold that the historical evolution of philosophy is identical with the development of its logical categories on one hand, and that there is a correspondence between particular moments in the history of philosophy and the figures that the spirit of the world assumes in the process of self-awareness on the other (cf. *Handbuch*, I, pp. 12-14). "We must not contrast the principle", Brandis sums up his criticism, "but rather the fact that [Hegel] considers the logical development of the determinations of the concept as being completed (*für vollendet*), that he therefore gives each theory a place as a degree and moment in a system which he considers to be complete, the result and essence of all those isolated moments in the history of philosophy; on the contrary, we consider that system to be a single moment (*als ein einzelnes*), at most the longest moment, and we cannot accept as valid a treatment that proceeds exclusively from that or from any other system which has developed so far, since until the history of philosophy has ended, one of his systems cannot contain all the results of philosophical research and give each the place due to it, nor does it give us a sufficient and precise understanding of the principal theories, let alone judge them" (*Handbuch*, I, p. 13).

After clearing up any possible misunderstandings (the construction method is one of the most frequent and dangerous as well as being the most attractive)³⁶ Brandis sets out the correct method, which is divided into three parts, the first two of which are the basis of the third, and proceed on a purely historical level: "It is clear, in the first place, that a purely historical understanding and exposition of the multiple is the first indispensable condition of every history in general including our own. Following this must be the connection of the multiple on the basis of internal and external causality, and only after these two conditions have been met can we speak of a link with a higher unity, unless this is already contained in itself and for itself in that treatment. Any violation of the first two necessary conditions, as we have already explained, only leads to an arbitrary and anti-historical result" (*Von dem Begriff*, p. 45).

The history of philosophy is an essentially historical discipline, aimed at obtaining an objective vision of the philosophical past, and it rejects any limitations that may derive from some higher speculative orientation. We could say that, more than a philosophy, the historian needs to be a philosopher himself in sensitivity and training: the historian needs "a trained sense for philosophy" explains Brandis, which enables him to practise philosophy "as a free and independent activity of the spirit – not adherence to a system, but the fact that the historian "has experienced philosophical pursuit and discovery himself" (p. 46). These are the philosophical

³⁶ Brandis's partly positive verdict is immediately mitigated by his recognition of the inability of the "construction" method to understand the "individual" that is the proper subject of history: "To briefly sum up what has been said so far: such an exposition can be excellent as it contains the past from the point of view of a specific philosophical form; it can open up splendid perspectives in history, since a part of the past must in any case be reflected in a certain historically determined system, but since it is unable to completely include the singular (*das Einzelne*) it cannot stand in for history nor want to construct the future through its isolation" (*Von dem Begriff*, p. 40).

requirements the historian should possess: "The historian must clearly know the tasks of philosophy and be animated by the idea of it, he must be persuaded that it is not something arbitrary, but necessarily defined in the nature of man, and that, as it can never be complete, all research undertaken truthfully and seriously will bring us closer to our goal. He must be able to understand the different forms in which [man] has tried to realize that idea precisely and with intelligence, and to recognise them in their relationship with one another" (p. 47). Philosophical sensitivity and experience are necessary to carry out the tasks of "internal history" which is the true centre (*der Mittelpunkt*) of the historiography of philosophy. Philosophies can condition one another in three historically documentable ways, as continuation, as correction and integration, or as opposition. These three aspects, observes Brandis, include "the internal causal series" and at the same time sum up the aims of "historical criticism". This requires sharp, expert judgement, based on facts, able to include every philosophy "for itself", on the basis of its real tendencies, and not on an external criterion which sets itself "above history".

Another type of criticism, that which derives from the possession of a system taken as a criterion, cannot be had and is not needed by the historian. It is not in the historian's power, because he must not judge the past, but only understand it. The historian does not need a system either, because "the past on its own offers the criterion and the judgement to the researcher who works in an honest and impartial way". Historical criticism, that is, is self-sufficient and if anything it is philosophical criticism which must have a historical basis, and not vice versa: "It is clear that in both senses, history offers its own criticism, because both the incomplete and incoherent nature and the unsustainability of principles are put to the test in the course of time. The historian's task is to shed light on this test and this happens, precisely when we show how one line of research is inspired by another, as therefore it is historically conditioned (*historisch bedingt*)" (p. 50).

The tasks of internal history are further specified in the *Handbuch*, where historical criticism is examined from two points of view: the first considers the polemical relationship between the doctrines, and the second, defined as "formal criticism", their logical coherence. As for the first, Brandis again states the three possible forms of relationship between philosophies (closeness, difference, and opposition), and for the second he refers to the meaning of the term *Kritik* used by Schleiermacher in his *Grundlinien einer Kritik der bisherigen Sittenlehre* (cf. below, pp. 52–55; see the meaning of "criticism" in Schlegel, above, pp. 13–25): "a criticism by means of which we can examine the form of the content and decide to what extent and to what point the task to be resolved has truly been resolved; only it can be used without compromising the reality of history (*ohne die Tatsächlichkeit der Geschichte zu gefährden*)" (*Handbuch*, I, p. 15). But Brandis is careful to warn us against an excessive use of this type of reading: "since history as such is not called on to decide as to the truth and the reality of the various scientific initiatives [...] formal criticism cannot be used in it to its full extent, but only to clarify and integrate the historical aspect considered earlier" (I, pp. 15–16).

Linked to internal history, finally, is the question of the possibility and the means of progress in philosophy. This can be taken in two ways, either as progress in the

contents or as progress in the method; on one hand as the gradual spiritual rise of man, and on the other as the refinement of the tools of knowledge.³⁷ Brandis believes in progress and he also looks to find confirmation of it in the development of nature: just as natural history progresses (*fortschreitet*) as it consolidates what before had been changeable and fluid, so the history of the spirit acquires an increasingly large field of activity, making the scientific work already carried out more stable. Brandis shows a certain ambiguity however in his use of the expressions “spirit” and “spiritual history”, at times signifying something universal and at others, more frequently, the concrete and always individual activity of man in the field of knowledge. From this ambiguity also derives the uncertainty with which he defines progress, which is not yet a historical truth, even though it is on its way to becoming one. “Let us leave this analogy as it is”, he declares regarding the resemblance between the history of nature and the history of the spirit, “until it is perhaps elevated to a historical truth when a great number of facts have been gathered. But it seems clear to me that the acts of the spirit produce something real only when, perfected to a certain degree, they leave something stable (*ein Festes*) behind them, and in this way, so to speak, they increase the treasure of the lasting acts of thought. By following this progress, the history of philosophy, like every other similar form of history, represents what has been developed in the human spirit, and what has happened in it by means of scientific endeavour; and even though the development of concepts proceeds at the same pace as progress in the other sciences, the most significant part of this development belongs to our history because philosophy is responsible if not for the formation (*die Bildung*) then at least for the development (*die Entwicklung*) of a very important series of thoughts, the series of abstract thoughts” (*Von dem Begriff*, pp. 62–63).

Every preconceived idea had been excluded from the historiography of philosophy, as we have seen. One of these ideas could also be progress, if it were defined philosophically and given the characteristics of absoluteness and necessity. From the point of view of “historical criticism”, that is to say, the empirical approach of the history of facts, the progress of philosophical research can be ascertained and justified: “Only the most rigorous historical fidelity will render the result useful. Therefore I do not believe that this progress by which the history of philosophy gains its unity should be deliberately pursued as the very problem of the history of philosophy, and instead I believe that it would come about of its own accord, accurately and surely, if the connection between individual pieces of rational research were proven in a complete and precise way. And this therefore is the true heart of the history of philosophy. A correct understanding of the individual systems and a historical evaluation of them depends on the correct link between these individual systems, just as knowledge of progress and the joining of the multiple into a unity do. It must be remembered in fact that we do not know another truth than our history” (pp. 65–66).

³⁷ As examples of these two ways of understanding progress, Brandis cites Ralph Cudworth (cf. *Models*, I, pp. 282–284) and Jakob Friedrich Fries (cf. *Models*, III, pp. 926–953) respectively.

The search for internal causality is not the historiographer's only task, unless it means a progressive examination of the ways he can penetrate and understand, which at a certain point has grown to include a second level of causality, external causality. This is to be sought, according to Brandis, on two different levels, the spatial and the temporal: in the first place in the singularity and the peculiarity of the nation (*die Nationaleigenthümlichkeit*), and in the second place considering the influence of a certain temporality (*die Einwirkungen der bestimmten Zeitlichkeit*). To have a clear idea of these expressions, it is necessary to consider the "living, mediated, and immediate" relationship of every historical phenomenon, and hence of every doctrine and system, with the totality of the others (*mit der Allheit der übrigen*). Every historical moment is to be understood in itself and in its relationship with the whole, but this whole is represented in the first place and essentially by the people, of which every individual is an element, while the totality of all peoples that forms universal history is not a fact that history can use and from which it can proceed. It is therefore not possible to completely integrate the history of philosophy with the history of peoples, because then it would become universal history (*Universalgeschichte*).

Unlike historians of an idealistic tendency, Brandis does not admit the possibility of making the history of philosophy coincide with the history of civilization (cf. Windischmann as an example of this type of historiography: below, pp. 145–146). This is due to the independence, the different function, and the effectiveness of internal and external causality. External causality can only offer philosophy its original tendency, which speculation will then develop in its own way according to its own criteria and principles. It is necessary, therefore, to be able to distinguish between the initial impulse that philosophy received from its "national peculiarity" and all the actions and circumstances that followed on from it. Now, finding the original element that gave the development of a civilization its characteristic form would appear to be a difficult task, indeed, as Brandis recognises, "it seems to be beyond human knowledge". Unless, by following Schleiermacher and learning from the orientation and the results of contemporary linguistics (from Herder to W. von Humboldt), he finally finds language to be the suitable tool for this purpose: "now, this [tool] seems to be language. This immediate organ of thought can become fossilized in a negligent and arbitrary way in speech and formulas and be altered with foreign additions, but in its intimate essence it is not subject to human will, it carries quietly on its way through universal history and urges the serious and honest researcher to recognize it as a safe guide in the midst of an infinite number of events" (p. 73).

Philosophy has a much closer link to language at its origins, when it was still connected to poetry and myth; as it subsequently tended towards the ideal and the abstract, it gained its own independence, that is to say, its own specific form of language, which was different from that of the people among whom it was cultivated. At the basis of this conviction is not only Brandis's own competence (and that of his master Schleiermacher) in ancient philosophy (pre-Socratic in particular), but a veritable theory of language, albeit in an embryonic form, as the tool that can explain the development of philosophy. What differentiates the various languages,

maintains Brandis, is the element that, from the “mobile intuition that only expresses itself individually”, defined and consolidated itself into a solid and definite concept (*zum festen und begrenzten Begriff*). This is precisely the ideal domain of language and the subject of the history of linguistics, which has to reach a preliminary definition of “the ambit of the abstract concepts of the Greeks” (p.76). But this domain is not immutable since it formed historically, and, on the basis of the written documents we possess, we can study its evolution up to the period in which philosophy presented itself as a science. Once it became stable, the concept liberated itself from subjective intuition and its various aspects were studied by “reflection”. Everyone initially accepted it as a fact received from tradition, then reflection developed it in all its expressive potential, making it, however, lose its primitive, intuitive and vital poetic element. This is the point at which philosophy, separated from poetry, gained its own scientific life (*ein eignes wissenschaftliches Leben*).

The history of language and the history of philosophy have to move in parallel and integrate each other. Initially, etymological research into the meaning of expressions and notions linked to the vital experience of individuals and the collective experience of a people will prevail, then the abstract determinations of concepts used by philosophical reflection will be discovered. But if we remember that, as well as influencing the formation of concepts and therefore determining the history of thought as it was first elaborated, language is in turn conditioned by the history of thought, and so we are also entitled to investigate the effects of reflection in the first manifestations of language and then use linguistic research in the phase in which philosophy developed independently. Brandis would like to see all this translate into the compilation of two types of philosophical dictionary: a first based predominantly on etymology would illustrate the meaning of concepts which can be found in the first poetic and philosophical manifestations of the Greeks; a second dictionary would derive the meaning of concepts from the works of the philosophers (a specific dictionary could be devoted to Plato and Aristotle).

Besides language, the external causal series also refers to the “vision of life” (*Lebensansicht*) proper to the time in which the philosophers lived. It is characterized by the opinions held on the soul, the destiny of man, freedom, and virtue, and, for the first philosophers, it coincided with the religious beliefs expressed by the cosmogonies received from the East. Initially, the history of philosophy came almost to coincide with the history of religious opinions as well as the history of language: to use a term which was fashionable then, as Brandis does, with the spirit of the time (*der Geist der Zeit*). Later, when philosophy had formed, it began to develop its own independence and to interfere and act on language and religious mentality in turn. Brandis does not go into all the consequences of this relationship, but stresses the need for the historian to subordinate the external causal series to the internal one. Other circumstances, such as the biographical, historical and political conditions, are considered to be of little importance for historiography (cf. the controversy with Tiedemann over the excessive importance given to political history: *Handbuch*, I, pp. 19–20). The essay ends with a recommendation that summarises the task of the historian, in line with Schleiermacher’s hermeneutical orientation. The historian should tend towards a direct and faithful vision of historical reality, to

obtain which he does not need rules and criteria but a keen historical sensitivity, able to feel and relive the experiences of the past: "Here too we leave further details to the narration itself; it is highly unlikely that general rules can lead far and they must of course bring the essential thing back to the sense for which it is historically significant (*dem Sinn für das historisch Bedeutende*)" (p. 88).

The distinction between the two points of view, the historical and the philosophical, based on a recognition of the linguistic nature of all speculative research, is the essential characteristic of the historiographical theory elaborated by Schleiermacher and his pupils. From this initial assumption it was necessary to move on and explain the possibility of connecting the two points of view, showing how so-called "external" history could be integrated with the "internal" history of philosophy. This approach did not necessarily exclude a meeting, if not quite a reconciliation, between such different historiographical tendencies as that of Schleiermacher and Hegel. August Boeckh's *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften*, mentioned earlier, gives us an example of such a reconciliation, albeit prevalently in the defence of history against the hegemonic claims of philosophy. If, as we have seen, philology coincides with history and, as "knowledge of the known", it is at the same time distinct from philosophy, the concept of the history of philosophy would appear to be problematic (cf. *Encyklopädie*, § 87, pp. 587–588). Philosophy must be understood "internally", that is to say, philosophically, and therefore, observes Boeckh, a philological description of its history would appear to be useless. But any examination of the concept of the history of philosophy shows the need to connect philology and philosophy. There are in effect two elements to be sought, one stable and universal (the philosophical element) and one mobile and individual (the historical). Since reason is of a divine nature, its creations, which are the content of philosophy, are what remains constant (*das Stetige*) in the development of knowledge. The same "fundamental truths" recur in the history of philosophy, but when they come to the consciousness of the most eminent thinkers, they take on different forms which mirror "the individuality of the writers". There is no progress in the fundamental truths, but only in the form in which these truths come to the consciousness of the philosophers. In order to link the two points of view, individuality and universality, Boeckh introduces the concept of philosophical spirit (*der philosophische Geist*), which is transmitted, both renewing and preserving itself, according to necessary degrees of development.

In the concept of "philosophical spirit", used with different meanings for the truth in the context of romantic and idealist culture, and above all in the idea of the necessary development, there is a clear distortion of Schleiermacher's position (cf. the greater caution shown by Brandis concerning progress in philosophy). But we must point out that the philosophical spirit Boeckh speaks of is not something that exists in itself regardless of the individuals in which it operates, and hence it cannot be known *a priori* by speculation, but it takes on a precise form only through historical research. On this basis, Boeckh believes that the necessary link between philology and philosophy is justified, or rather, according to the condition set out by F. Schlegel, the union of the two disciplines in the same person is justified. "Setting out the same [degrees of development] in their continual connection, the history of

philosophy reveals the essence of the philosophical spirit; and since this in turn exists in *a priori* ideas, the history of philosophy is at the same time also philosophy. The person called on to treat the history of philosophy is a philologist who can understand philosophical ideas and a philosopher can reconstruct the history of his science only if he has a training in philology" (p. 590).

In order to understand Boeckh's historiographical theory more clearly, it is useful to read § 89 of his *Encyklopädie* (pp. 615–618), devoted to the problem of the method of the history of philosophy. The only method possible is the historical one (*die Geschichte der Philosophie hat keine andere Methode als die Geschichte überhaupt*). It is true, admits Boeckh, that in the field of science the spirit is independent of external circumstances and we have to follow the internal connection of ideas, that process of free thought which can be determined "internally" on the basis of the ideas of reason. But these laws, modified as they are by the individuality of the various thinkers, cannot be known *a priori*. The historiography of philosophy is able to connect the philosophical element to the historical element only if the rules of philology and hermeneutics are followed: "the best defence against hasty constructions is careful attention to chronology and the connection of the science to the other ambits of life; indeed time forms philosophers, but philosophers in turn form time. We must therefore treat the sources with a rigorously hermeneutic and critical method, in such a way that we may come to know the necessary causal link in the ideas that constitute the contents of each philosophy on one hand, and in the external presentation of each philosophy through the different systems on the other; and each detail must be raised to the general without losing its peculiar characteristic. We will thus achieve an ideal vision of the movement of everything and the smallest and most insignificant details will still be respected" (pp. 616–617).

Boeckh finally moves onto the history of the history of philosophy (cf. also § 88, pp. 609–615, complete with bibliography), with mostly negative judgements. Diogenes Laertius provides a model of historiography which is indifferent to any system, but which results in "an aggregate of information without life or spirit". Even more dangerous, however, is the opposite attitude of those who approach the history of philosophy with a system and take it as a unit of measurement against which to judge the others. This method, which Boeckh calls a "unilateral critical method", has taken on various forms, from the *a priori* constructions of Hegel and Schelling, which cancelled out the peculiar nature of the different systems, to the claims of the Kantians, like Buhle and Tennemann, or the empiricists like Tiedemann, who took a system as the criterion to judge the others, to come finally to Ast and Fries, who subordinate systems to what they call "philosophy itself", but who then understand this as their own philosophy. But, Boeckh observes, since every system always falls into the series of historical development and so an absolute philosophy is unthinkable, no system can serve as a unit of measurement for the others. The system which the historian must use cannot be a particular system, placed alongside the other systems, but the system formed from the systems themselves in the course of historical evolution. Boeckh ends with a declaration of a historicist bent: "the true historical method does justice to all the systems, attempting to understand them as the degrees of development of a single philosophical spirit. The criterion of

measurement of criticism is certainly a system here too, but a system that is not placed alongside the others, but rather the cycle that these systems periodically form in their totality, determined in a rigorously historical fashion” (p. 618).

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On the philosophy of Novalis: Totok, pp. 305–308; G. Moretto, ‘Etica e narrazione in Novalis’, *Filosofia*, XXXV (1984), pp. 183–198; L.V. Arena, *La filosofia di Novalis. Epistemologia e gnoseologia* (Milan, 1987); S. Zecchi, ‘Novalis: mito e linguaggio simbolico’, in *Romanticismo, simbolo, interpretazioni*, ed. by S. Zecchi (Milan, 1987), pp. 11–31; T. Grosser, *Identität und Rolle. Kontext, Konzept und Wirkungsgeschichte der Genieästhetik bei Novalis* (Opladen, 1991).

On Friedrich Schlegel (besides the general bibliography in Totok, pp. 303–305): J. J. Anstett, ‘Einleitung’, in F. Schlegel, *Philosophische Vorlesungen (1800–1807)*, Part I (Munich..., 1964); W. Michel, *Aesthetische Hermeneutik und frühromantische Kritik. Friedrich Schlegels fragmentarische Entwürfe, Rezensionen, Charakteristiken und Kritiken* (Göttingen, 1982); S. Fabbri Bertoletti, ‘L’inizio della filosofia nel pensiero del primo Schlegel’, GCFL, LXII (1983), pp. 173–192; C. Ciancio, *Friedrich Schlegel. Crisi della filosofia e rivelazione* (Milan, 1984); Id., ‘La dialettica di spirito e lettera nel pensiero di Friedrich Schlegel’, *Archivio di storia della cultura*, V (1992), pp. 187–198; Behler, *Studien zur Romantik*, pp. 9–45; F.N. Mennemeier, *F. Schlegels frühromantisches Literatur-Programm*, in *Idealismus und Aufklärung*, pp. 283–295; H. Dierkes, ‘Ironie und System. F. Schlegels “Philosophische Lehrjahre” (1797–1799)’, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, XCVII (1990), 2, pp. 251–276; G. Walther, *Le Shakespeare de la prose grecque. Platon et sa philosophie dans la “critique” de F. Schlegel*, in *La naissance du paradigme herméneutique*, pp. 185–223; J. Zovko, *Verstehen und Nichtverstehen bei F. Schlegel. Zur Entstehung und Bedeutung seiner hermeneutischen Kritik* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1990); L. Van Eynde, *Introduction au Romantisme d’Jéna: Friedrich Schlegel et l’Athenäum* (Bruxelles, 2000); *Symphilosophie. F. Schlegel à Jéna*, ed. by D. Thourd (Paris, 2002); D. Messlin, *Antike und Moderne: Friedrich Schlegels Poetik, Philosophie und Lebenskunst* (Berlin and New York, 2011); P. Cerutti,

‘L’histoire de la philosophie nous aide-t-elle à penser l’unité de l’homme? Schlegel historien de l’idéalisme allemand’, in *La philosophie et le sens de son histoire. Études d’histoire de la philosophie autour de Jean-François Marquet et Jean-Luc Marion*, ed. by P. Cerutti (Bucharest, 2013), pp. 87–107; P.K.J. Park, *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780–1830* (Albany, N.Y., 2013), pp. 69–95 (‘India in Friedrich Schlegels Comparative History of Philosophy: The Formation of the Kantian Position’). - On Plato in Schleiermacher and F. Schlegel: F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Introductions aux dialogues de Platon (1804–1828). Leçons d’histoire de la philosophie (1819–1823). Suivies des textes de Friedrich Schlegel relatifs à Platon*, transl. by M.-D. Richard (Paris, 2004); M. Bauer, *Schlegel und Schleiermacher: Frühromantische Kunstkritik und Hermeneutik* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, and Zürich, 2011); Th. Kobusch, ‘Schlegels Platonverständnis’, in *Argumenta in dialogos Platonis*, Theil 2: *Platoninterpretation und ihre Hermeneutik vom 19. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. by M. Erler and A. Neschke-Hentschke (Basel, 2012), pp. 51–65; G. Scholtz, ‘Platonforschung und hermeneutische Reflexion bei Schleiermacher’, *ibid.*, pp. 81–101.

On Schleiermacher: see below, 2.1.6.

On August Boeckh, beside the bibliography on the history of hermeneutics cited above, cf. three articles from *Philologie und Hermeneutik im 19. Jahrhundert*: F. Rodi, ‘“Erkenntnis des Erkannten”. A. Boeckhs Grundformen der hermeneutischen Wissenschaften’, pp. 68–83; I. Strohschneider-Kohrs, ‘Textauslegung und hermeneutischer Zirkel. Zur Innovation des Interpretationsbegriffes von August Boeckh’, pp. 84–102; E. Vogt, ‘Der Methodenstreit zwischen Hermann und Boeckh und seine Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Philologie’, pp. 103–121; also, T.M. Seeböhm, ‘Boeckh and Dilthey. The Development of Methodical Hermeneutics’, *Man World*, XVII (1984), pp. 325–346; A. Horstmann, ‘August Boeckh und die Antike-Rezeption im 19. Jahrhundert’, in *L’antichità nell’Ottocento*, pp. 39–75; G. Cambiano, *Filologia e storia delle scienze in August Boeckh*, *ibid.*, pp. 77–98; A. Horstmann, ‘L’herméneutique comme théorie générale et comme organon des sciences philologiques chez A. Boeckh’, in *La naissance du paradigme herméneutique*, pp. 327–347; G. Civikov, ‘“Connaissance du connu” et science de la littérature. Remarques sur la théorie herméneutique d’August Boeckh’, *ibid.*, pp. 349–358; G.B. D’Alessio, ‘August Böckh: tra filologia e filosofia’, *Archivio di storia della cultura*, V (1992), pp. 127–153.

On Wilhelm von Humboldt’s concept of historiography, cf. the bibliography cited by Totok, pp. 201–204; see also: F. Tessitore, ‘Humboldt, Niebuhr e la Decadenzidee’, in Id., *Comprensione storica e cultura* (Naples, 1979), pp. 113–165; Id., *Humboldt e la “Universalgeschichte”*, in *Il senso della storia universale*, pp. 77–140; E. Flaig, ‘Ästhetischer Historismus? Zur Ästhetisierung der Historie bei Humboldt und Burckhardt’, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, XCIV (1987), pp. 79–95; P. Giacomoni, *Formazione e trasformazione. “Forza” e “Bildung” in Wilhelm von Humboldt e la sua epoca* (Milan, 1988); A.-M. Chabrolle Cerretini, *La vision du monde de Wilhelm von Humboldt: histoire d’un concept linguistique* (Lyon, 2007); *Wilhelm von Humboldt: Universalität und Individualität*, ed. by U. Tintenam and

J. Trabant (Munich, 2012); *Wilhelm von Humboldt, Duecentocinquant'anni dopo: incontri e confronti*, ed. by A. Carrano, E. Massimilla, and F. Tessitore (Naples, 2017); J. Östling, *Humboldt and the modern German university: An intellectual history* (Lund, 2018); J. Quillien, *L'image de Wilhelm von Humboldt dans la postérité* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2019).

On Leopold von Ranke's historiographical theory: F. Tessitore, 'Teoria del *Verstehen* e idea della *Weltgeschichte* in Ranke', in *Comprensione storica e cultura*, pp. 167–234; Id., 'Ranke, il *Lutherfragment* e la *Universalgeschichte*', in *Il senso della storia universale*, pp. 175–197; S. Backs, *Dialektisches Denken in Rankes Geschichtsschreibung bis 1854* (Cologne and Vienna, 1985); M.J. Zemlin, *Geschichte zwischen Theorie und Theoria. Untersuchung zur Geschichtsphilosophie Rankes* (Würzburg, 1988); M. Ghelardi, 'Alle origini della riflessione di Leopold von Ranke sulla storia: K.F. Bachmann e J.G. Fichte', *GCFI*, LXIX (1990), pp. 22–38; F. Gilbert, *History: Politics or Culture? Reflections on Ranke and Burckhardt* (Princeton, N.J., 1990).

2.1 Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834)

Geschichte der Philosophie

2.1.1 Born in Wrocław/Breslau on 21 November 1768, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher was educated in the Pietist tradition which came from his mother's side of the family. He was then sent to the *Paedagogium* in Niesky and the theological seminary of Barby. He soon became independent of Pietism and enrolled at the University of Halle, where he was taught by the Wolffian Eberhard (cf. *Models*, III, pp. 619–639), who was an opponent of Kant, and who introduced him to Plato and ancient philosophy. He took up the post as preceptor to the count of Dohna, who introduced him to the salon of Henriette Hertz, where he met Friedrich Schlegel. During his first period in Berlin (1796–1802), he devoted himself to editing, an activity which soon made him famous as one of the greatest representatives of Berlin romanticism. It was in this period that he published or at least planned works such as *Reden über die Religion*, the *Monologen*, the *Grundlinien einer Kritik der bisherigen Sittenlehre* and a translation of the entire works of Plato (this period is the subject of Dilthey's *Leben Schleiermachers*, published in 1867–1870, which marked the beginning of the rediscovery of Schleiermacher's philosophical work, above all in the field of hermeneutics, a rediscovery which has continued up to the present day and now extends to his work on ethics, pedagogy, aesthetics, and historiography). In 1804 Schleiermacher began his academic work, initially at the University of Halle for a short period (1804–1806), then, from 1810, at the University of Berlin, of which he was one of the promoters and where he was dean of the Faculty of Theology. As secretary of the philosophical section of the Berlin Academy of Sciences he held various courses in the Faculty of Philosophy too. Of the work he undertook in this period only the *Christliche Glaube* was published, while the

vast amount of material he gathered for his lessons was published posthumously by his pupils. He died on 21st February, 1834.

2.1.2 The first point of reference is Schleiermacher's *Opera omnia*, published posthumously by his pupils and printed by Reimer of Berlin (*Sämmtliche Werke*, Berlin 1834–1864) in three *Abtheilungen*: I. *Zur Theologie*, 13 vols; II. *Predigten*, 10 vols; III. *Zur Philosophie*, 9 vols (vol. IV contains: IV.1. *Geschichte der Philosophie*, IV.2. *Dialektik*). Another, incomplete, edition came out at the beginning of the 20th century: *Werke in Auswahl*, ed. by O. Braun and J. Bauer, 4 vols (Leipzig, 1910–1913; 2nd ed. 1927–1928; repr. Aalen, 1967). Since 1980 work on a critical edition has been under way: *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by H.-J. Birkner, G. Ebeling, H. Fischer, H. Kimmerle, and K.V. Selge (Berlin and New York, 1980 ff.).

Leaving aside a chronological distinction that takes into account the various phases of Schleiermacher's philosophical and religious thought (cf. Scholtz, *Die Philosophie Schleiermachers*, pp. 45–53), we can group his work into four categories. In the first are works edited by Schleiermacher himself, some of which he wrote in his youth, but are nevertheless still effective and successful: *Ueber die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (Berlin, 1799); *Monologen. Eine Neujahrsgabe* (Berlin, 1800) (critical ed. by M. Schiele, Leipzig, 1902); *Vertraute Briefe über F. Schlegels Lucinde* (Lubeck and Leipzig, 1800); *Grundlinien einer Kritik der bisherigen Sittenlehre* (Berlin, 1803); *Die Weihnachtsfeier. Ein Gespräch* (Halle, 1806) (critical ed. by H. Mulert, Leipzig, 1908); *Ueber den sogenannten ersten Briefe des Paulos an den Timotheos. Ein Kritisches, Sendschreiben an J.C. Gass* (Berlin, 1807); *Gelegentliche Gedanken über Universitäten in deutschem Sinn. Nebst einem Anhang über eine neu zu errichtende* (Berlin, 1808); *Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums* (Berlin, 1811); *Ueber die Schriften des Lukas. Ein kritischer Versuch* (Berlin, 1817); *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt* (Berlin 1821–1822), 2 vols (ed. by M. Redeker, Berlin 1960).

Of these works the *Grundlinien einer Kritik der bisherigen Sittenlehre* (*Werke in Auswahl*, I, pp. 1–346) is important from a historiographical point of view. It is not a true history of ethics as the historical references are presented in a systematic structure: the first book deals with principles, the second with concepts, and the third with ethical systems. In the *Einleitung* there is an explanation of the notion of “criticism” which is not very different from that given by F. Schlegel and then taken up by Brandis as a historiographical category (cf. above, pp. 13–25, 31–47). Criticism concerns the “pure scientific form” of ethics, but since science needs to find a correspondence between form and content, formal correctness will be examined according to two processes: that which cannot receive a scientific form cannot be the object of moral teaching and, vice versa, the forms that cannot completely represent an ethical content are insufficient. “This principle”, observes Schleiermacher in the *Einleitung*, “is the basis of the possibility that a science cultivated in such a varied way as ethics, once even only the concept of it is given, can be criticised without accepting previous research and even without a new one being

put forward" (p. 11). On the basis of this methodological condition, ethical doctrines are divided into two large groups: systems of pleasure and systems of virtue, or, in more modern language, systems of happiness and systems of perfection. In the first category we find Epicurus, Shaftesbury, Ferguson, and Garve, and in the second stoicism, Kant, Fichte, but also Plato, Aristotle and Spinoza. The completeness of an ethical system depends on its ability to mediate between multiplicity and unity and to overcome the antithesis between the multiple and concrete needs of individual life and the universal forms of the ethical principle. This mediation was successful in Plato and Spinoza, but not in Kant and Fichte, the target of Schleiermacher's insistent polemic (cf. Cesa, *Schleiermacher critico dell'etica di Kant e di Fichte. Spunti dalle "Grundlinien"*, pp. 19–34).

In a second group we can place all of Schleiermacher's works of an ethical, political, and historiographical nature, some of them published in journals, like the *Herakleitos der dunkle* mentioned above, but linked above all to Schleiermacher's activity as a member of the Academy of Sciences. Most of these memoirs are on historical subjects (19 out of 36). The memoirs *Ueber Diogenes von Apollonia* (1811), *Ueber Anaximandros von Milet* (1812), *Ueber die ethischen Scholien zur nikomachischen Ethik des Aristoteles* (1816), *Ueber die ethischen Werke des Aristoteles* (1817), *Ueber die Commentäre zu Aristoteles Kategorien und Analytik* (1821), and *Ueber Platons Ansicht von der Ausübung der Heilkunst* (1825) were presented to plenary sessions of the Academy. Three were presented during meetings of the philosophical class: *Ueber den Begriff des Sophisten, besonders in Bezug auf den Protagoras* (1816); *Ueber die Aechtheit der aristotelischen Ethiken* (1816); and *Skizze einer Untersuchung über den Philosophen Hippon* (1820). Schleiermacher read the following during sessions of the class on the history of philosophy: *Einiges über die Fragmente des Demokritus* (1814); *Ueber das Verzeichnis der Schriften des Demokrits bei Diogenes Laertius* (1815); *Einiges über die Scholien zur nikomachischen Ethik* (1818); *Ueber die Ethik des Aristoteles* (1818); *Einiges über die Fragmente des Empedokles in Bezug auf den Pythagoreismus desselben* (1820); *Ueber eine Glosse des Timäus* (1826); and *Bemerkungen über die schwierige Stelle von der platonischen Zahl in Resp. VIII. und die bisherigen Erklärungen derselben* (1827).³⁸

Much of Schleiermacher's work in the field of philosophy remained unpublished. It is contained in numerous notebooks which he used as the basis for his lessons, in part as simple notes and in part as a text which he had worked on with a view to possible publication. This situation has created a series of problems for his editors, both of a philological and an interpretative nature, as in the case of the *Dialektik* (*Dialectic or, the Art of Doing Philosophy: A Study Edition of the 1811 Notes*, transl. by T.N. Tice, Atlanta, GA, 1996), and his writings on hermeneutics, published for the first time by Friedrich Lücke in 1838 under the title *Hermeneutik und Kritik mit*

³⁸Not all the dissertations were published. See the complete list and relative bibliography in Moretto, *Introduzione a Schleiermacher, Etica ed ermeneutica*, pp. 35–36. On Schleiermacher's activity as an Academy member, cf. Bartholmèss, *Histoire philosophique de l'Académie de Prusse*, II, pp. 447–455; and Harnack, in particular pp. 847–850 (list of the memoirs).

besonderer Beziehung auf das Neue Testament, on the basis of a manuscript version by Schleiermacher and other versions written by his students. Heinz Kimmerle carried out a new edition entitled *Hermeneutik* (Heidelberg, 1959, 1974²), removing the writings of his students and adding other fragments (not taken into consideration by Lücke), as well as the academic speeches of 1830–31. Manfred Frank based his *Hermeneutik und Kritik* (Frankfurt, 1977) on Lücke's edition. English transl: F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism, and Other Writings*, ed. by A. Bowie (Cambridge, 1998).

Among other writings of the *Nachlass*, besides works on aesthetics, pedagogy, ethics, psychology, and politics, there is also a *Geschichte der Philosophie*, which was printed by Heinrich Ritter and takes up the first part of the second volume of the philosophical section of Schleiermacher's *Opera omnia* (1839). The text is taken from the notebooks used by Schleiermacher for the course he held in 1812, which was chosen because it is more complete than those of 1819, 1820 and 1823. Ritter avoids using students' notebooks, but he also omits part of Schleiermacher's text to avoid confusion and useless repetition, and he limits himself to adding a *Kurze Darstellung des spinozistischen Systems* as an appendix, a text dating to before 1802 when Schleiermacher was still young, cited here because of its references to Leibniz and Kant, philosophers who are not dealt with in the notebook taken as the basis for the edition. What emerges is a brief work, slightly more than 300 pages long, more concerned with outlining the general characteristics of philosophy and its historical development than looking at individual philosophers and systems in detail. Indeed, as Ritter points out in the 'Vorrede' to justify his choice, the value of Schleiermacher's work on the history of philosophy concerns more general concepts than individual aspects or particular questions of interpretation.

An important place, finally, is given to the Platonic dialogues, in part because of the importance of Plato in the formation of the thought of Schleiermacher himself and that of many other writers of the early nineteenth century: Platon's *Werke* (Berlin, 1804–1805), 5 vols (in three parts); 2nd ed. 1817–1828 (see *Schleiermacher's Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato*, trans. by W. Dobson, Cambridge and London, 1836). It was F. Schlegel who had the idea of translating Plato, which was supposed to be a joint work between the two friends; but other interests and commitments took Schlegel far from Berlin and the work fell to Schleiermacher (on the circumstances of the translation cf. Dilthey, I/2, pp. 37–75). This translation is part of the effort to popularize the intense philological work carried out on Plato in this period, with the editions of Bekker (Berlin, 1816–1818), Ast (Leipzig, 1819–1832) and Stallbaum (Leipzig, 1821–1825). The new image of Plato which came to be established in the course of the early nineteenth-century is closely linked to the resolution of a historical and philological question relating to the chronology of the dialogues. Schleiermacher discusses the problem at length in the *Einleitung* to his translation. He does not deny that Plato's philosophy is "in becoming" as Schlegel had argued (cf. above pp. 21–22), but he aims to find the principle that animates and guides this becoming, which will be the foundation of the system.

Schleiermacher's position becomes clearer when compared with that of Tennemann (Platon's *Werke*, I, pp. 27–28). Tennemann had attempted to establish

the chronological order of the dialogues on the basis of historical traces, with the aim not of finding the origin and the development of the system, but of freeing Plato's mature and complete work from its youthful imperfections. Tenneman, like his predecessors, assumes that there is a more or less complete and coherent Platonic system to which any reading or understanding of the dialogues must be subordinated. It is a conviction that derives from certain philosophical ideas, a dogmatic prejudice that stands in the way of a direct reading of the works. These works, Schleiermacher believes, are not to be read on the basis of a 'given' we already have, but are moments that are in themselves complete but connected together to form a whole, necessary tools for reaching the result, which is to understand "the spirit of the man and his doctrine" as a single unity (I, p. 6). In the case of Tennemann, the order of the dialogues will have a merely extrinsic meaning which is not essential for an overall interpretation; in Schleiermacher's view, on the other hand, determining the order of succession of the dialogues directly affects the image of Plato's thought, indeed it essentially coincides with this image. Schleiermacher defines the first type of succession as "extrinsic", however accurately and precisely it is established (and he recognises that Tennemann is a serious historian); the second type is instead "internal" and "natural", and it is given greater importance in the case of possible divergences.

Schleiermacher therefore does not deny the possibility and the importance of defining the chronological succession of the dialogues, but he believes that it cannot be achieved by starting from considerations of a historical or biographical nature, based on fragmentary information taken from a reading of the dialogues themselves (which Tennemann had done, since stylometry was still unknown), but only by taking as a basis the natural order in which Plato developed his thoughts, the guiding idea that gives the Platonic system coherence in all its development. In dialectic, which is this guiding idea, the philosophical principle of Platonism meets its principle of interpretation: just as each dialogue is a living part of the whole, in which the system becomes concrete and develops, so knowledge in its multiple forms (the real sciences: physics and ethics) constitutes itself in its essential relationship to unity (dialectic), a unity which is at first thought only as possible and then unfolds and is grasped in its individual parts. The dialogues are therefore divided into three groups: 1) the youthful dialogues, which constitute the "elementary part" of philosophy (*Phaedrus*, *Protagoras*, *Parmenides*, *Gorgias*) in which the dialectic unity of knowledge is only thought of as possible; 2) the intermediate dialogues (*Theaetetus*, *The Sophist*, *The Politics*) which mark the transition from dialectic to the concrete articulation of knowledge; and 3) finally the mature dialogues (*Phaedo*, *Philebus*, *The Republic*, *Critias*), which form the "constructive part" of Plato's philosophy, because real knowledge is based here in the two forms of ethics and physics. The other dialogues, among which the *Cratylus* and the *Meno*, are defined as secondary.

2.1.3 The use of hermeneutics had characterised the creation of the genre of the history of philosophy in the modern age. The historiography of the 16th and 17th centuries was called "philological" (in a negative sense by the "philosopher" histo-

rians of the eighteenth and nineteenth century) precisely because of the prevalence of its critical, hermeneutical, and philological methodology, that is to say the *ars critica*, according to Jean Le Clerc's definition. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, with Bayle, Heumann, and Brucker, came the elaboration of a proper 'theory' on the use of hermeneutics in the historiography of philosophy (cf. *Models*, II, pp. 130–134, 423–427, and 489–490). In this context, hermeneutics presented itself as a tool for research into the history of philosophy. With Schleiermacher, the terms of this relationship change in such a radical way that it has been called a "transcendental" turning point, in the sense that he was the first to define the act of understanding as such and its general laws, regardless of the particular context in which they are applied. Hermeneutics therefore ceases to be understood as an auxiliary discipline (of theology, jurisprudence, or historiography) and is given a primacy compared to these disciplines which we can define, in Dilthey's terms, as the sciences of the spirit, since it determines the conditions of their possibility. Interpretation is in fact a state in which man necessarily finds himself, as an individual, by his constitution, open to the totality, so that the foundation of hermeneutics coincides with the very foundation of philosophy as knowledge concerning man.³⁹

The different way Schleiermacher characterizes hermeneutics depends on a different way of understanding the relationship between the two forms in which the act of understanding is articulated and the corresponding hermeneutical method. In relation to the link which Schleiermacher and the linguistics of his time recognised between language and thought, discourse can have two relationships, with the language and the thought of the writer, which give rise to two types of interpretation. The first is "grammatical" interpretation, which is called "objective" and also "negative" because it outlines the linguistic context within which discourse flows, and it excludes everything that does not conform to it, regardless of the writer himself. The other is "technical" or "psychological" interpretation, which is defined as being "subjective" as it starts from the writer's style to understand discourse "as a representation of thoughts", since language is nothing but "an organ of man at the service

³⁹ For the foundation of hermeneutics on ethics as a theory of concrete knowledge which is therefore communicated by way of language, cf. Scholtz, *Die Philosophie Schleiermachers*, pp. 145–152 and the relative bibliography (see also G. Vattimo, *Schleiermacher filosofo dell'interpretazione* (Milan, 1968, pp. 67–110). On the "transcendental turning point" carried out by Schleiermacher in the field of hermeneutics, cf. Ravera, *Il pensiero ermeneutico*, p. 114. Other scholars, however, insist more on the continuity with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century hermeneutics; cf., for example, M. Beetz, 'Nachgeholte Hermeneutik. Zum Verhältnis von Interpretations- und Logiklehren in Barock und Aufklärung', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, LV (1981), pp. 591 e 594–595; L. Cataldi Madonna, 'L'ermeneutica filosofica dell'Illuminismo tedesco: due prospettive a confronto', *Rivista di filosofia*, LXXXV (1994), pp. 185–212. The influence of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics can be felt in two ways: it has been taken up by Dilthey as a general method of the historical and social sciences on one hand, and on the other, through Heidegger, it influenced the philosophical (existential) hermeneutics of the twentieth century. On this development, from Schleiermacher to the historical school (Ranke), from Dilthey to phenomenology (Husserl and Yorck), and finally to Heidegger, cf. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, pp. 177–269.

of his individuality" (*Hermeneutik*, ed. Kimmerle, p. 113). There are also two methods. It is possible to employ a divinatory act, which allows a sort of identifying oneself with other individualities, or to use a comparative method, which is discursive and proceeds by analysis from the general to the particular. In reality, it is not possible to choose between the two methods because "they refer to one another and they must not be separated" (p. 149).

At different times, one form of interpretation has been considered more important than the other, and scholars have spoken of an evolution or regression of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics (cf. the opposing interpretations of Dilthey and Szondi, who respectively consider the psychological and the grammatical form as the most important). It is, in reality, impossible to discern an essential change in Schleiermacher's hermeneutical theory from the early fragments to the final works, but rather a gradual awareness of the extreme complexity and the problematic nature of a hermeneutical theory, and this forced him to shed light on an aspect that had so far been ignored, the psychological, subjective aspect, which is no less essential than the objective, linguistic element, and has to be integrated with it. This consideration was based on the repeated references to the need to connect the two forms of interpretation, but it also derived from the concept of "circularity", which is a fundamental part of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. This is indeed the central pillar of his theory, not only because it is formulated in almost the same terms from the very first reflections on the subject (dating from 1805) up until the later theories of the 1830s, but above all because the circle is the conceptual category which explains the possibility and the different forms of the act of interpretation.

"The vocabulary and the history of the age of a writer", states one of Schleiermacher's aphorisms of 1819, "are like the whole on the basis of which his writings must be understood as something singular, and the whole in turn starting from the individual". Schleiermacher continues: "Everywhere perfect knowledge is in this apparent circle (*in diesem scheinbaren Kreis*), and every individual detail can only be understood starting from the general and vice versa. And all knowledge is scientific only if it is formed in this way. This requires placing oneself as equal (*die Gleichsetzung*) to the writer and the better we possess this condition the better placed we are for interpretation, but also that nothing can be understood at a single glance; on the contrary, all reading, by increasing our preliminary knowledge (*Vorkenntnisse*), and places us in a condition to understand better. Only the insignificant can be understood at first glance" (p. 84).

The adjective "apparent" used to describe the hermeneutical circle tells us that it is not a "vicious" circle which, by contradicting a precise rule of logic, would prevent hermeneutics from achieving the form of true knowledge (cf. Vattimo, *Schleiermacher filosofo dell'interpretazione*, pp. 185–186). But it serves to show even better that it is not really a circle because it does not imply the simple referring back from one pole of the discourse to another, but implies progress, a rising up towards increasingly comprehensive unities, which lead to an enrichment and a perfecting of the process of interpretation. It is a circularity which is not closed, therefore, and which can be better represented by the image of a spiral. From this derives the non-definitive, never complete nature of the process of understanding, so

that interpretation, as Schleiermacher repeats more than once, “is an infinite task” (*Hermeneutik*, p. 84).

This circularity can shed light on the meaning of the expression “to understand the writer better than the writer understood himself”, which was repeated at the time by philosophers such as Kant and Fichte and philologists such as Ast, and which referred to the possibility of making conscious even that which had been unconscious in the mind of the writer. Every time Schleiermacher uses the formula it is in the context of the need to find a synthesis between the two processes of interpretation, the “combination of the objective and the subjective” (as stated in a work of 1809: *Hermeneutik*, p. 56), that is to say, the divinatory and the comparative methods as mirror images of each other (in the academic lectures of 1829: p. 138). A “better” understanding does not derive from an act of divination, which is intuitive and inexplicable, and is based only on a feeling of affinity with the author. It is true that we must tend to become “an immediate reader”, but this is the aim, what interpretation must be, and not the condition of departure. The process of getting closer involves a gradual acquisition of the linguistic and spiritual universe in which the author lived and in which he created his work. This encounter between the two personalities does not mean the fusion of the cultural horizons of the writer and the reader, but it requires the interpreter to leave his world and to participate in the spiritual world of the author by reconstructing it and experiencing it himself. The final aim, identification with the writer, is purely ideal, because there is no objective knowledge that is stable and definitive: nothing is objectively before and independent of language, everything is interpretation.

Applying the framework of hermeneutical understanding to historiography means considering history as a whole, an entirety that lives and is concrete in its parts. The historical explanation, just like interpretation, therefore, is an infinite and progressive task, whose ideal aim is the complete solution of the multiple in the unity of which it is part, a unity which has to be sought however, and cannot be given in an abstract way before or outside of history. We can see an initial reflection of hermeneutical theory in historiography in the great translation of Plato which Schleiermacher worked on for 30 years.⁴⁰ In the margins of this activity and in connection with his reflection on hermeneutics is a memoir of the Berlin Academy

⁴⁰ Cf. W. Jaeger, *Platos Stellung im Aufbau der griechischen Bildung*, II: *Der Wandel des Platobildes im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, in Id., *Humanistische Reden und Vorträge* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1937), pp. 138–152. Jaeger gives Schleiermacher credit for having not only rediscovered Plato but also for having created the opportunity for the birth of the historical sciences (or sciences of the spirit, in Dilthey's words) in the nineteenth century with his translation: “Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato has a classic significance for the modern science of the spirit, the same that the Alexandrines' research into Homer had for philology in the most ancient sense” (p. 140). For his part, Dilthey justifies the renewed interest in Plato in early nineteenth-century German culture by comparing the speculative conditions of German philosophy with classical thought. The phase of subjective idealism, represented by Socrates in Antiquity and by Kant and Fichte in Germany, was followed by the phase of objective idealism (Plato on one hand and Schelling and Schleiermacher on the other); after this came Hegel, the Aristotle of German philosophy (Dilthey, I/2, pp. 39–40).

(read on 24 June 1813): *Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens*.⁴¹ In effect, translation represents one of the most difficult hermeneutical situations, since it involves the meeting of two individuals separated by different linguistic horizons. Every language, since it is a living individuality, is independent and cannot be reduced to any other language. “Will anyone who is convinced that, in practice and intimately, thought and expression are entirely the same thing, and bases the entire art of all understanding of discourse and hence of every translation on this persuasion, ever be able to claim to separate a man from his native language and think that an individual, or even a series of his thoughts, can become the same thing in two different languages?” (p. 232). It is impossible to translate as the writer originally wrote into the translator’s language since “everyone produces originally only in their own mother tongue” (p. 233).

As a form of interpretation, translation is not a meeting between two individuals which takes place mechanically “half way”; the writer cannot move towards the translator, but the translator and the reader must move towards the writer. Translation is a difficult and problematic situation that becomes more difficult and more imperfect the further the world of the writer is from our own. The distinctive element of translation is an awareness of a difference, the persistence of an alterity which must transpire from the new linguistic context. The translation’s circle of influence and degree of perfection are extremely uncertain and depend on the linguistic skill of the translator as well as the malleability of the language at reproducing the syntax, morphology, and vocabulary of the foreign tongue. For Schleiermacher, German had reached the greatest degree of malleability, and this allowed it to assimilate foreign linguistic universes; the German people therefore were ready to carry out the essential historical function of mediating between different cultures of all times and places (cf. p. 243; it is significant that this idea was expressed in 1813, the year of the battle of Leipzig).

What is of particular interest here is how hermeneutic theory influenced the observations on the nature and the method of the history of philosophy which are found at the beginning of the course of lessons published by Ritter under the title *Geschichte der Philosophie* and divided into two parts, each preceded by an interesting ‘Einleitung’. Because of the close relationship which Schleiermacher established between the history of philosophy and philosophy, Ritter stressed the importance of these lessons in the ‘Vorrede’ (*Geschichte der Philosophie*, p. 10). Dilthey was of the same opinion, and he placed a view of the history of philosophy before his presentation of Schleiermacher’s system *als Vorbereitung*: it functioned as a necessary introduction to the system, in the first place in a general sense, because it is from a comparison with the philosophers of the past that Schleiermacher developed his own philosophy; but in an even more important sense, because for Schleiermacher, as we will see, “anyone who wants to possess philosophy must understand it historically” (*Geschichte der Philosophie*, p. 15; cf. above, Intr., § 4).

⁴¹ F.D.L. Schleiermacher, *Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden der Uebersetzens*, in Id., *Sämtliche Werke*, Part III: *Zur Philosophie*, vol. II (Berlin, 1938), pp. 239–245.

The first 'Einleitung' begins by describing the circularity between philosophy and the history of philosophy: "I concede that it is not an easy task. Indeed, anyone who writes the history of philosophy must possess philosophy to be able to choose the individual facts that belong to it, and anyone who wants to possess philosophy must understand it historically" (p. 15). An equally clear, but independent, definition of the circle of philosophy and the history of philosophy had been provided in the same period by Hegel. The problem was highly topical and of great importance to philosophers. For the moment, Schleiermacher does not address it, but he opens up the debate to include the definition of philosophy, and repeats what he used to explain more fully in his course of lectures on dialectic and ethics. He proceeds according to his usual method, by antitheses and differences. At the level of knowledge, the contrast (*der Gegensatz*) is between appearance and reality, relation and being, science and empirical knowledge; and with this last antithesis we have already entered the realm of higher or philosophical knowledge. Here the most difficult contrast (*weit schwieriger*) to resolve is between the "real sciences" and philosophy, even though there must be a connection between the disciplines as the *Grundfactum* in order for them to be constituted scientifically. From a passage of the *Sittenlehre*, which is similar in content but clearer, it would appear that philosophy (as *Weltweisheit*) consists properly in the unity of the real sciences or, at least, in an aspiration to this unity, from the point of view of both the object and the method: "There are essentially two ways in which being expressed in the two real sciences can be known, the speculative and the empirical way. The highest unity of all knowledge concerning the two spheres of being, thought of as the reciprocal permeation of speculative and empirical, is the ideal of philosophy as wisdom (*Weltweisheit*)" (*Entwurf eines Systems der Sittenlehre*, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, III: *Zur Philosophie*, III, p. 36).

There are two paths of knowledge: one, speculative knowledge, explains the multiple starting from unity; the other, empirical knowledge, moves in the opposite direction and goes from the multiple to unity. The condition of both is the identity of the multiple and the unity, at least as a possibility; only in this way does the search for unity starting from multiplicity (by means of the empirical historical method) or the search for the multiple starting from unity using the philosophical or speculative, scientific method, have a foundation. Every real science can be represented according to these two points of view: the speculative method on one hand characterises physics as a theory of nature (*Naturwissenschaft*), and ethics on the other as a theory of history (*Geschichtswissenschaft*); the empirical method places the natural sciences (*Naturkunde*) with physics and the historical sciences (*Geschichtskunde*) with ethics. In accordance with these distinctions, history can be considered in a speculative way ("in its becoming from the universal") or in an empirical way ("in its consisting in itself as particular"). In the first case, the single parts are deduced from the presupposed unity; in the second case, the individual is considered in itself and placed in a unity which must be sought. For Schleiermacher this latter case represents the true meaning of historical research into philosophy and it is on the basis of this meaning that the problem of the relationship between philosophy and its history seems to find a solution: "All real knowledge is historical

and it aims to understand the individual by means of its place in the whole. All philosophical [knowledge] denies spatio-temporal independence and aims to understand each individual by means of its identity with the whole. It is completely wrong, therefore, in historical research such as this, to search for identity, which then only becomes an apparent identity of one individual with another. This can be useful for some pragmatic purposes, but it corrupts the historical vision (*verdirbt aber den historischen Blick*)” (*Geschichte der Philosophie*, p. 16).

The different way of understanding historical research depends on the way unity is understood with respect to multiplicity: either as a totality which contains the individual and allows it to exist without incorporating it into itself, or as an identity which eliminates every difference and in which every individual is identical to the other and to the whole. The former is a correct historical approach, typical of the romantic vision of history which, with Herder, defended the inalienable independence of every historical individual; the other is the “pragmatic” concept typical of the Enlightenment, which reduced the development of history to a series of cause and effect without any qualitative distinction. This interpretation of the passage cited (cf. Dilthey, II/1, p. 47; Braun, p. 311) is basically correct, albeit a little too general, since it does not take into account the fact that Schleiermacher’s polemic, for the terms in which it was stated, extends beyond the Enlightenment and affects every form of historiography conditioned by a speculative point of view.⁴²

Schleiermacher’s reference to the two forms of knowledge of real being, the speculative and the historical and empirical, is clear; in the historical field the abstract philosophical way is unacceptable, as it tends towards identity and makes differences disappear. If we want to understand the real without resolving it into an abstract identity, we must proceed *historisch*, that is to say, preserve each individual in its independence and place it at the same time within the whole of which it is a part. But the historical does not coincide completely with the empirical (the *a posteriori*). The determination of unity is not simply the final result of the sum of many different individuals; it has to be in some way subject to pre-cognition, in so far as it is present and operating in every individuality. The relationship between parts and whole (historical individuals – totality) must be understood in an analogy with the living organism, as history is essentially a living unity: *ein lebendiges in sich Eines* (*Geschichte der Philosophie*, p. 16). Every part of the organism is alive thanks to the life of the whole, but it carries out a specific vital function essential for that life. The totality, which corresponds therefore to the life of the organism, is present at the beginning and the end of the process, as its presupposition and its result. When

⁴²“Pragmatic history” was understood in the eighteenth century and above all in the period of Kant, as having a positive and broader meaning than the old concept of “*historia magistra vitae*”. The history that, with the aid of philosophy, aims to find the complete system of cause and effect is “pragmatic”, thus reducing historical phenomena to general philosophical principles (cf. *Models*, II, pp. 535–537). By the beginning of the nineteenth century it was common to find criticism of this vision of history, which was accused of being arbitrary and *a priori*; cf. M. Hahn, *Geschichte, pragmatische*, in HWPh, III, cols 401–402; G. Kuehne-Bertram, ‘Aspekte der Geschichte und der Bedeutungen des Begriffs ‘pragmatisch’ in den philosophischen Wissenschaften des ausgehenden 18. und des 19. Jahrhunderts’, *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, XXVII (1983), pp. 158–186.

considering the parts, we have to presuppose the whole, which is the condition of the existence of those parts with all their specific differences on one hand, and it subsists, on the other, in the agreement and the unity of all the parts.

Without an intuition of the totality, historical research would be reduced to an “extravagant collection (*Sammlung*) of individual facts”, which, for Schleiermacher, had mostly been the case up to that point. It is necessary in the first place, therefore, to form a general image (*ein allgemeines Bild*) on a preliminary level (p. 17). Between the abstractly philosophical vision, which holds firm to the universal and does not meet the individual, and the empirical concept which starts from the individual and never reaches the universal, Schleiermacher proposes a synthesis, or rather (in an analogy with the hermeneutical circle and the proper movement of dialectic, which is also the movement of living reality) a circular way of proceeding which is both speculative and empirical, because that which is individual takes its meaning from the universal and vice versa, and one is the condition for finding an increasingly complete explanation of the other.

At the end of the first ‘*Einleitung*’, Schleiermacher attempts to sum up his historiographic theory by going back to the circularity that is its main characteristic and attempting to define it, albeit in a problematic sense: “Thus we find the original, the cyclical, and the rational everywhere and we have taken into consideration the general image. But in the context of our object there is much that is individual that cannot be placed within the whole, both because of the connection which is naturally never complete in historical research, and because of the lack of historical evidence. Therefore, the treatment is not equal” (p. 20). There is a limit in constituting the individual from the universal, a limit due to the irreducible individuality of that which is part of history. The task of the historian therefore is infinite and approximate, just like that of the interpreter. There is a precise reason for this in Schleiermacher’s philosophy, which is conceived in a Platonic sense as dialectic, the art of moving from the individual and the particular to the universal and, in the opposite way, of deducing the particular from the universal. Dialectic however can outline an incomplete system (even though it always tends to completion), because it cannot grasp the initial and the final moment; it does not offer a complete concept of the individual and it does not give a complete concept of absolute unity, which is not a concept properly speaking, but a simple idea (in Kantian terms), not a form of knowledge, but the foundation and the condition of all knowledge (cf. Lombardo, *La regola del giudizio*, pp. 175–213).

The problem of the possibility and the method of the history of philosophy is brought up again at the beginning of the second *Einleitung*, in relation to the need to define the degree of independence of modern philosophy. Modern philosophy can be understood as a living, complete whole, like Greek philosophy, and therefore independent (*selbständig*); or it can be considered as the second part of a bigger whole, which would be *die gesamte Geschichte der Philosophie*, not an abstract unit, the sum of its parts, but a living whole, with its own life and development: *Geschichte als lebendig sich fortentwickelndes* (*Geschichte der Philosophie*, p. 146). According to this second sense the history of modern philosophy is understood as the continuation of ancient philosophy. Both possibilities (independence

and non-independence) can be justified by means of dialectic. Dialectic gives us a method for understanding modern philosophy as independent (and hence a living being) as opposed to ancient philosophy, but constituting with ancient philosophy a greater unity, since in reality it can be demonstrated that unity and opposition are necessarily related (*das positive erst aus dem Verhältnis der Einheit und des Gegensatzes zwischen beiden*: p. 145).

The concept of philosophy itself contains this double possibility: unity and multiplicity. It is possible to distinguish something common in it (*gemeinsam*) and something multiple and modifiable (*mannigfaltig und modifizabel*), not as two different aspects which exclude one another and deny one another, but as two poles that refer to and integrate each other. A hermeneutical circle is thus produced within the very concept of philosophy, a circularity which is reflected in the concept of the history of philosophy: without a definition of philosophy, Schleiermacher stresses, it does not seem possible to write its history, but any explanation of the concept of philosophy seems to be possible only by way of its history.⁴³ Here too there are two different ways of resolving the circle between philosophy and the history of philosophy, one philosophical and one historical (like the circle between unity and parts, and the general and the particular). From a theoretical point of view it would seem that a solution is possible or, at least, the possibility of finding one is not excluded, but, Schleiermacher warns, it would not be useful for the historiography of philosophy because it would determine it in a dogmatic way, falsifying the “historical vision”, as we have said. One effective solution can only be found on a historical plane (which is the same place as hermeneutics and the intersubjective relationship), by identifying a circularity which is neither apparent nor negative between the philosophical and the historical, the general and the particular, a circularity which exists in the necessary relationship between two poles, which nevertheless remain in opposition and independent.

The starting point is the “general”, that is to say, the definition of philosophy, but a “temporary” general, which will be better defined in the course of the historical narrative which deals with the particular, living individual. The procedure that privileges an understanding of the particular and does not contain any idea of the whole within which to place it, is not adequate: it is historiography as a *Sammlung*, a simple collection of materials. Schleiermacher therefore indicates the need for the historiography of philosophy to presuppose a certain general vision, albeit temporary, as an idea to regulate the historical part. In the course of his treatment, the historian will make this idea increasingly complete and concrete by showing how single living individuals follow on from one another within the totality. It is necessary therefore to start from a provisional definition of philosophy. This definition rests on two forms of opposition: the first (which Schleiermacher defines as “relative”) between “higher” and “lower”, as its concepts have to be linked to each other

⁴³ Schleiermacher, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, p. 146: “Hence, explanation of philosophy. Without such [a explanation] no history would seem to be possible; on the other hand, the explanation only seems possible by starting from a complete knowledge [of history]. The dispute can only be resolved by means of philosophy, hence not here”.

in a system and always have something above them that contains them and something below them that is contained in them. The other form of opposition, defined as “formal”, is between intuition (*Anschauung*) and feeling (*Gefühl*), between the form of individual knowledge and that which makes us perceive unity. What derives from the union of these forms is true knowledge as inclusion of multiplicity in unity and deduction of the multiple from unity. The definition of philosophy comes from the synthesis of these contrasting characteristics, “the highest consciousness in the form of intuition”, or “intuition raised to the greatest degree” (p. 146). What derives from this are two relationships of philosophy: one with religion (to which it is linked by the “highest degree” and the “consciousness” of unity), and the other with real knowledge, to which it is connected by intuition. Two different paths lead to philosophy, the first goes from the real sciences, and the second from religion. By applying this to the history of philosophy, Schleiermacher notes that ancient philosophy privileged the relationship of philosophy with the real sciences, while modern philosophy privileges that between philosophy and religion.

As a conclusion, Schleiermacher presents two problems which concern the more general division of historical material and which represent, therefore, a transition to the application of the themes discussed so far to historiographical practice. In the first place, it is necessary to explain the correspondence between the logical order and the chronological and historical order. The logical order has a sort of primacy since philosophy follows the general law of the development of consciousness, “on the basis of which man finds things before he finds himself”. “Ancient philosophy”, Schleiermacher continues, “is predominantly the conscious becoming of reason (*das Bewußtwerden der Vernunft*) in the form of ideas; modern [philosophy is] predominantly the conscious becoming of reason in the form of the will. The former must (*muss*) take place first, and be followed by the latter. Hence in ancient philosophy man is considered in general a natural essence. There is no opposition to destiny, no philosophy of freedom from this point of view; in modern philosophy on the contrary, this is always the recurrent task. Indeed, man places himself against nature as will and he considers destiny as unwarranted interference” (p. 147).

The second problem concerns the transition between the two historical periods, the Greek and the Christian, conceived of in terms of independence and opposition. The transition can take place in two ways, observes Schleiermacher, either gradually or by oscillation. While the first way would deny the independence of each part of history, the second respects it, albeit recognising a certain relationship between the two. Philosophers had effectively already turned to religion within the Socratic school, especially with Plato, and then with Stoicism and Neoplatonism. But in the period in which this tendency developed, the theological principle had been produced independently and “almost purely” by Christianity. Modern philosophy, therefore, has to start with Christianity (and is hence known as “Christian philosophy”), while ancient philosophy ends with Neoplatonism. It is clear that Neoplatonism is in a strange position here because it falls chronologically in the same period as Patristic philosophy. Schleiermacher wavers here: the most exact thing, he observes, would be to take the account of ancient philosophy up until its end, that is, up to Neoplatonism, and begin modern philosophy with its historical

beginning, namely the Fathers. “This is what I would like to do, but I cannot (*das wollte ich, konnte aber nicht*)», he concludes. In effect, the account of modern philosophy begins with Neoplatonism (albeit considered as an *Einleitung*), after concluding the cycle of ancient thought again with Neoplatonism (dealt with, however, in a fragmentary and superficial way).

2.1.4 *Geschichte der Philosophie*

2.1.4.1 The *Geschichte der Philosophie* is divided into two parts, each with its own introduction: *Geschichte der alten Philosophie* (pp. 13–141) and *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie* (pp. 143–282). It is further divided into periods, sections, and paragraphs which correspond to the different moments and aspects of the development of thought. The final parts are incomplete, both that on ancient thought, in which Neoplatonism is merely outlined, and above all that on modern philosophy, which stops at Spinoza, despite the title of the last chapter (*Bis zu Kant*) which would lead us to expect something at least on eighteenth century thought. To make up for the omission, Ritter published the *Kurze Darstellung des spinozistischen Systems* (pp. 283–311) as an appendix, even though, both in its content and method, it is very different from the course of lessons on the history of philosophy.

2.1.4.2 Two criteria are used to formulate the different periods, a principal one of an internal nature (*innerlich*), and a secondary, external one (*äusserlich*). The first reflects the necessary movement of the philosophical spirit, and the second follows the chronological order. The two orders correspond exactly to the more general division between ancient and modern philosophy and their division into two periods. Greek philosophy is marked by the appearance of Socrates and his attempt to systematize thought, and is therefore subdivided into *Bis Sokrates* e *Von Sokrates an*; modern philosophy has a watershed in the Renaissance and is therefore divided into two parts: *Bis auf die Wiederherstellung der Wissenschaften* and *Bis auf Kant*.

Within each of these four phases, criteria for dividing of a speculative nature prevail. In the first place, explains Schleiermacher in the ‘*Einleitung*’, it is preferable to begin historical research with antiquity because it constitutes “a closed and complete whole” which we can follow in all the phases of its development, from birth to death. If we consider the final point, we note that it is marked by the return to the unity of philosophy and theology in the superstition of Neoplatonism, just as philosophy had initially developed from an original mythology. The extremes of the birth and death of ancient philosophy are thus given; in the middle is the point of greatest development, which falls in the age of Socrates and Plato (Attic philosophy), the *Grundfactum* of which is the division of philosophy into logic (dialectic), ethics, and physics. Physics and ethics represent the real side (*die reale Seite*) of knowledge, and dialectic the scientific and speculative side. Ethics is that form of knowledge which studies the being of man in things; physics the being of things in man; and dialectic constitutes the “general element”, which manifests itself in turn in two different attitudes, one negative and the other positive: the negative one in the controversy against lower reflection, which considers things in their dispersion, and

the positive one in mythology which grasps things in their unity. The three periods of ancient philosophy are thus constituted: in the first place the disciplines are distinct from one another (pre-Socratic philosophy), then they are unified by the more complete meaning given to dialectic (Socratic and Platonic or Attic philosophy), and finally they are again fused together and confused (Alexandrine philosophy or Neoplatonism).

Up to Socrates, philosophy had four schools, each of which was independent because it dealt exclusively with one particular discipline: the Ionic school gave rise to physics, the Pythagorean school to ethics, the Eleatic school to dialectics, and the Sophistic school to the confusion of all three. Thus we have a complete cycle of development, which began with the lack of distinction between philosophical objects in mythology, tended towards their separation, and finally reunited them (through the idea of the unity provided by dialectic); all this in analogy with the movement proper to Greek civilization, marked, after an original indistinctness, by isolation, and finally by the rediscovery of its centre again in Athens. The transition from mythology to philosophy was gradual, and so we still find a lot of mythology in the founders of the schools (Thales, Pythagoras, and Xenophanes). The Ionic school, which followed in the tradition of cosmogeny and epic poetry, aimed at determining natural science, following the two possible routes, one towards the universal, and the other towards the particular. Thales, Anaximenes, and then Heraclitus followed the first route, and Anaximander and then Empedocles and Anaxagoras the second (see Ritter for the distinction between dynamic and mechanical physics). To this internal division, Schleiermacher also adds a chronological division between a "fragmentary" period constituted by Thales and his immediate successors, and a later period which began with Heraclitus, after a hiatus of several decades due to the Persian invasion of Asia Minor.

The Pythagorean school, which followed in the lyrical tradition and was therefore open to the study of ethics, did not develop in as many different ways. In any case, it is not possible to determine exactly how it developed because of the problem of distinguishing between the work of Pythagoras and that of his early followers (Alcmaeon and Hippasus) and the later representatives of the school (Archytas and Philolaus). The Eleatic school expressed unity, firstly in a positive and mythological sense, with Xenophanes and Parmenides, and then in a purely negative sense in the controversy against those who believed in multiplicity. With Zeno, who embodied the process of the disappearance of the positive and the mythological, came the crisis of Eleatic philosophy, which got worse during the Sophist period. The age of the Sophists corresponds to the unification of Greece which found its (cultural more than political) centre in Athens. As the different philosophies reunited, each lost its initial one-sidedness but also undermined its own foundations with a mechanical and superficial vision. Thus, the philosophical spirit waned and anti-philosophical systems and doctrines flowered, such as that of Protagoras (the degeneration of dynamic physics), the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus (the degeneration of mechanical physics), and finally the position of Gorgias (the degeneration of Eleatic dialectic), which represents the most negative point in the history of this movement.

The second period of philosophy reached its apogee with Socrates and Plato, the true golden age of ancient philosophy when the philosophical spirit (*der speculative Geist*) became fully speculative, and included the entire sphere of philosophy in the unity of consciousness. The period is divided into three deteriorating phases, from Plato and Aristotle to the Stoics and Neoplatonists. These phases were preceded by a preparatory phase which contained the beginnings (*die Anfänge*) of systematic philosophy carried out by Socrates, which contains the germ of all subsequent philosophy. Socrates's "potential" is actualized in the first place and in the best way, by Plato, the true model of systematic philosophy: "In the first place, he Socratically collected everything into a unity, and he must be considered the first systematic philosopher. All its characters can be found in him, therefore. The dual direction of knowledge towards unity and the whole and, in the second case, towards physics and ethics. In Plato everything is represented to some extent. Nothing is separate on its own" (p. 98).

The different poles of philosophical discourse, joined in Plato's dialectic, soon began to come apart in the work his followers. In effect, Platonism developed according to two tendencies: the first aimed to guarantee "speculative talent" to the detriment of real and empirical knowledge (the first members of the Academy), and the second was conditioned by the empirical to the point of limiting the speculative (Aristotle and the Peripatetic school). This opposition grew in the following period, which was characterized on the positive side by the Stoics who, though they accepted a limited concept of Aristotle's dialectic rather than that of Plato, still accepted Plato's attempt to understand the real from the universal, the particular from unity. The negative side, which developed from the "empirical" Aristotelian position, produced the materialistic and anti-philosophical positions of the Epicureans and the Sceptics. These are the premises for the final period of Greek philosophy, which was further weakened in its transition to the Romans, to reach true decline and its historical end with the Neoplatonists. The crisis of ancient philosophy is one aspect of the crisis of the Greek language and civilization. Its return to the origins, typical of every civilization which has reached the end of its historical journey, influenced reflection in this period, which was characterized on one hand by the study of history, rhetoric, and grammar, and on the other by the search for a golden age to place at the beginning of history. The biological cycle of Greek philosophy thus ended with its death.

Modern philosophy is divided into two great periods by the rebirth of letters, a phenomenon which Schleiermacher does not devote much attention to. The first period (*bis auf die Wiederherstellung der Wissenschaften*) is divided in turn into two *Zeiträume*, the age of the Fathers of the Church, in which philosophy is still fragmentary and mixed with theology, and the age of the Scholastics, in which philosophy takes on its definitive form and even becomes the "norm for theology". It is interesting to note the way in which medieval philosophy is divided (from John Scotus Eriugena to Anselm of Aosta; from Roscelin to Duns Scotus; and from Durand of Saint-Pourçain to Gabriel Biel). This division refers not to the degree to which these thinkers were influenced by Aristotle, but rather to the different solutions to what for Schleiermacher was the central question of medieval thought, the

problem of universals. The golden age of Scholasticism was the middle period (according to a biological framework, its maturity), which is in turn divided into three phases: the first, from Roscelin to Peter Lombard and John of Salisbury, in which philosophical research was still in a fragmentary form; the second from Richard of St. Victor to Vincent of Beauvais (with an appendix on Bonaventure), when the scholastic system clearly emerged thanks to the use of dialectic; and finally the third period (from Albert the Great to Duns Scotus, with Aquinas as its principal figure), which represents the complete maturity of the movement, which aimed not only to outline the concept of theology but also scientific knowledge.

Schleiermacher clearly states that there is a continuity between modern philosophy and scholasticism, not only because they are close in space and time, but also because “scholastic philosophy contains all the germs of modern philosophy [...] All its principal objects are contained in it, even the form is determined by it” (p. 230). What prevails in both in fact is a relationship with the idea of the divinity, but as from the Renaissance onwards real knowledge acquired a previously unknown importance (through geographical and scientific discoveries and the rediscovery of Antiquity). In this way, the speculative (or dialectic) spirit managed to find its own intrinsic opposite pole again (real knowledge), which had mostly remained absent in the course of Christian thought. The dualism proper to the development of philosophy was thus reproduced more clearly than in the past, a dualism between two tendencies that Schleiermacher defines as “mystic” and “empirical”. The mystic proceeds from the transcendent and attempts to penetrate the real sciences, while the empirical goes back to the absolute, starting from the real. Both of these attempts are authentically philosophical if they keep the two poles alive; if they do not, it is no longer philosophy and we fall into pure empiricism or mysticism or empty controversy. Indeed, observes Schleiermacher, only “the few who correctly intuit the relationship between the empirical and the absolute have the characteristic of quiet (*Charakter of Ruhe*)” (p. 232).

These distinctions are set out as an introduction to modern thought and are mainly justified from a theoretical point of view (even though there is also a reason of an ethnic and geographical nature: the Germans are more prone to mysticism and the English, French, and Italians to empiricism), but they find no correspondence in the historiographical division. What follows are the usual divisions, with the distinction between philosophers belonging to a school, and independent philosophers. Among the latter category are Telesio, Bruno, Campanella; and philosophers of an empirical tendency such as Bacon, Hobbes (with Rousseau in an appendix), Grotius, and Locke; then Descartes, Malebranche, and Geulincx who belonged to the “mystical” group; and finally Spinoza, who, for Schleiermacher, attained “philosophical peace” since he managed perfectly to reconcile the two tendencies, not in an extrinsic or eclectic way, but in a way that was authentically philosophical.

2.1.4.3 After these general guidelines, we can take a look at some of the salient moments in the development of philosophy. In Greek thought these are represented by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The figure of Socrates is central to Greek thought: “everything worthy came from his school”, states Schleiermacher, who does not

hesitate to call him the founding father (*Urheber*) of systematic philosophy. At the basis of this interpretation is clearly Plato's image of Socrates, which Schleiermacher prefers to that of Xenophon, who, as he had never been a philosopher, never fully understood the thought of his master. Plato's testimony is basically confirmed by Aristotle's interpretation, in which Socratic philosophy is important for two significant contributions: the discovery of the first principles of science and his reflection on virtue. Contained in Socrates, therefore, are the germs of Plato's dialectic and ethics.

Like that of Socrates, Plato's dialectic is based on a polemic with the Sophists, against the theory of the opposition between multiplicity and unity, and against the declaration of the subjectivity of all knowledge. Plato attempts to demonstrate the necessary link between unity and multiplicity and the reality of our knowledge by means of the intuition of absolute unity, in which all oppositions are resolved and disappear, a unity which is not only formal but also substantial (cf. instead, Hegel's interpretation of Plato's dialectic in which unity goes beyond the oppositions and preserves the reconciled opposites): "He also presents this unity of opposites as an absolute unity (*eine absolute Einheit*), like for example *Theós* and *agathón*, which are above *ousía* and *episteme*. In this way, his dialectic is not only the formal side of the reflection of the real, both physical and ethical, but also the heuristic principle of absolute unity or the idea of divinity, which he only presupposes in his physical and ethical works, and here instead invokes. In all this he appears only as the scientific continuation of Socrates. Indeed, he not only added this method of his to the general connection of concepts and posited the unity of concepts as necessary for the multiplicity of things, but it would seem that he gave rise to the idea of the divinity, both in a purely dialectic way and through teleology, which is the imperfect separation between the formal and the real. From this point of view, he showed that he had certainly reached the idea of the divinity, and indeed all Hellenistic philosophy had to be theistic because theism emerges from the polemic against sceptic anti-philosophy" (p. 103).

Physics is fully linked to and dependent on dialectic. As its basis is the doctrine of ideas, which leads us to state that the unity of the concept is truly real being compared to the multiplicity of things, which it is related to as the original with respect to its derivative (*das Urbildliche zu dem Abbildlichen*). Unity is the category for comprehending reality; in this, Plato differs from both Heraclitus and Anaxagoras, though he takes the need to find the persistent under the changeable from Heraclitus and from Anaxagoras the need to find the substantial homogeneity of things. Even though unity is the fundamental condition of nature, which is the unity of the spiritual and the corporeal, of the body and the soul, which finds its concrete realization in the form of life, knowledge of it is not complete because nature is not an original but a derived unity. The mythical character of every natural explanation is a consequence of this, and in Plato it necessarily takes the form of the creation (*cosmopoía*). The force of the *nous* expresses itself in the idea of life, but never adequately, since at no point in time is matter ever entirely comprehended under the form of *nous*. This concept of matter as the cause of evil allows us to move on to Plato's

ethics, which Schleiermacher understands essentially as the doctrine of good and evil.

It is above all in dialectic that we can see the difference (and the inferior nature) of Aristotle's thought compared with that of Plato. It is not possible to speak properly of dialectic in Aristotle, but only of the syllogism, a merely formal science which cannot reach the truth but can only indicate the rule of correct reasoning. Criticism of this kind of Aristotle's logic was widespread in modern thought starting with Francis Bacon, but now Schleiermacher and idealistic and romantic culture more in general add the rejection of all abstract and formal knowledge, which not only Aristotle but also the transcendental idealism of Kant was thought to represent. At the basis of the "formalistic" concept of knowledge is the doctrine of empiricism: you reach the general by starting from the particular, but we never have the principle of composition and, in an analogous way, in metaphysics, knowledge of the first absolute and necessary cause is excluded, but is presupposed. Knowing therefore, for Aristotle is based on not knowing (*auf dem Nichtwissen*) and this, for Schleiermacher, reveals his lack of speculative talent (*sein Mangel an speculativen Talent*). The domain of the empirical is even more evident in Aristotelian physics, which lacks the Platonic idea of god as the creator and in which reference to the divinity is merely extrinsic. This explains the overall negative judgement on Aristotle's thought: "We cannot deny there is a great lack of speculative spirit, nevertheless the idea dominated him from the inside (we can see this particularly in the incongruencies), only this idea is suffocated by the strength of the empirical. Aristotle had great merit in describing nature and as the first erudite. His works are written with apparent clarity, as he was required to do by conforming to the rules of logic, but they are on the whole confused, as usually happens when one is not sure in his principles" (pp. 120–121).

Before moving on to modern philosophy, we should look at the meaning of the adjective "Christian" which defines it. In effect, for Schleiermacher, Christianity provided the material for the construction and the development of modern philosophy thanks to its three characteristic doctrines: the idea of the spirit as deriving from God, the nature and the origin of evil, and the creation of the world. This debate has accompanied the course of medieval and modern thought, and it was to be finally clarified in the philosophy of Kant. This point of view grants greater philosophical importance to Augustine, who is placed among the great thinkers. Schleiermacher recognises in him the presence "of many of the essential ideas of modern philosophy, in germinal form" (p. 165). Augustine contributed notably with his definition of the idea of God, which is the foundation of all human thought. This is the basis for one of the first proofs of the existence of God and two of the central theses of dialectic (of Augustine, but also Schleiermacher): 1) intuition of the absolute is the basis of every thought of the finite and the relative; and 2) subject and predicate coincide in the absolute, since God is substance devoid of accidents. A second series of problems which Augustine had the merit of submitting to philosophical reflection concerns theodicy; evil is made to consist (quite rightly, observes Schleiermacher) of *mala voluntas*, the distorted use of freedom, while physical evil, which is

generally thought of as evil, is nothing substantial, as it simply consists of imperfection relating to nature.

Schleiermacher notes that there is a zero point (*Nullpunkt*), a phase with no philosophy, between Augustine and Scholasticism, after which there was a revival, but on a different basis. The difference was not only formal, linked to the increasingly systematic nature of philosophy, but it concerned the contents themselves. There was in fact a new relationship with the forms of Greek thought: in Patristic times, Christian philosophers saw their work as a continuation of ancient philosophy, while the scholastics made themselves totally independent of it. The doctrine of creation was elaborated without any residue of ancient emanatism. This doctrine also contained elements of the central question of scholasticism: universals. Schleiermacher shows a direct interest in the content of scholastic doctrine. It is a new interest compared to previous historiography, which had expressed an extremely negative view of medieval thinkers, accused of being ignorant barbarians or slaves to official ecclesiastical theology (Brucker, Tennemann); sometimes they were partially saved, but only for their “form”, the method of the *disputatio*, considered the one original and truly productive element of Scholasticism (Tiedemann). Against them (and with Buhle, who had taken the term ‘scholastic’ generally as the philosophy taught in the schools), Schleiermacher finds the essence of Scholasticism in the question regarding the nature of universals and the attempt to overcome the opposition between realism and nominalism. The formulas used up till then (and in fact still used in our own text books) did not satisfy him. The first formula, according to which, the realists derived from Plato and the nominalists from Aristotle, is judged to be false, because both of them are and want to be Aristotelians; it is unthinkable for nominalists to be considered Stoics, because little or nothing was known of Stoicism in the middle ages. The other formula – *universalia ante rem, in re et post rem* – is of no use because the middle term can indicate the realists and the nominalists alike. Schleiermacher explains the dispute by the dual polarity implicit in all philosophical reflection, represented on one hand by the tendency towards the transcendent (realism), and on the other by the tendency towards the empirical (nominalism), and he adds that the truly real (*das wahrhaft Reale*) is found in the joining of the two tendencies, as was frequently the case in medieval thinkers.

The attempt to overcome opposition characterises the greatest philosophers, above all Aquinas and Durand of Saint-Pourçain. Aquinas considered the real from the point of view of the opposition between matter and form, hence between multiplicity and change, but he attributed the general and unity to knowledge and the intellect. Even clearer is the combination of the opposite attitudes in Durand, the philosopher of the transition (*Uebergangspunkt*) from the realistic phase of scholasticism (which went up to Duns Scotus) to the nominalist phase: his theory of truth is nominalistic, but his theory of the will is realistic. The last phase of Scholasticism, however, was anti-philosophical, and it started with Ockham and developed nominalism in an increasingly unilateral way. Schleiermacher launches on the traditional forms of accusation against this period of decline, accusations which were usually aimed at Scholasticism in general: atheism (in Ockham), determinism (in Buridan), and scepticism (in Pierre d’Ailly). Finally, it is rather strange to see the accusation

of a 'practical' or political attitude coming from a Lutheran theologian. Ockham is criticised for this in particular, as he was well-known for his anti-clerical controversies. He is accused of having created anarchy and disorder with a "revolt against the principle of authority". In conclusion, the nominalists are denied any merit for having claimed freedom of thought: "realism does not deserve the rebuke of having excogitated it [the chain of authority], and nominalism does not [deserve] the opposite praise, since it acted on the basis of a principle of will and absence of control" (p. 227).

In the section devoted to modern philosophy, after stating that the content and methods are a continuation of those of scholastic thought, Schleiermacher sheds light on the contrast between two tendencies, which correspond to realism and nominalism, and which in the modern age are called mysticism and empiricism. Among the mystics, particular importance is given to the theosophers, above all the Germans Johannes Reuchlin, Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim, Theophrastus Paracelsus, and Jakob Böhme. They expressed modern philosophy's tendency to mysticism in a more unilateral way, proceeding from the absolute to explain the conditioned and the finite. But their rejection of experience was the cause of the lack of success of this form of philosophizing, which Schleiermacher does admire (not unlike his contemporaries, if we think of F. Schlegel, albeit in a more moderate form) because of its decisive anti-materialistic stance, which he sees as "the original form of German philosophy". However, because of that lack it reveals "something highly anti-scientific" (p. 243).

There is little importance attached to the current of empiricism, which could not but end up as Hume's scepticism because of its tendency to find the principles of reality by starting from the empirical. More interest is shown in the so-called mystical tendency, which corresponds in practice, according to a more common historiographical category of the time, to the rationalistic current. For Schleiermacher, who here too attempts to understand the writer better than he did himself, Descartes is like a forerunner of Kant and the proponent of a radical dualism between transcendental philosophy and real knowledge (*Wissen*): "If we think that God is the ultimate substrate of transcendental philosophy at the same time in which extension and thought are the substrate of real knowledge, we can better understand the historical significance (*die geschichtliche Bedeutung*) of Cartesian philosophy. It represents the complete immersion (*Versenken*) of transcendental philosophy in real knowledge, like God in spirits and in things, not like something that remains above them, but as something included in them as immanent and also a principle of their difference. Therefore, since there is nothing that is above and is intermediate, the two sciences and their objects are completely separate, since life is not assumed in a strict sense as a joining of opposites. Thus, everything is explained in a specific and proper fashion, and that which is inconsistent in the demonstration itself is resolved in this idea, which understands Descartes better than he understood himself (*den Cartesius besser versteht, als er sich selbst verstanden hat*). If we consider the character of modern philosophy in general, Cartesianism is the search for the joining of philosophy to real knowledge such that philosophy is rooted in it and, together with it, unity is hidden under the form of opposition" (pp. 270–271).

The attempt to overcome opposition is the task which Schleiermacher believes the Cartesian school set itself, which he describes in the following order of development: Malebranche, Geulincx, and Spinoza. Malebranche clarified the concept of cause by introducing a middle term to overcome dualism. Indeed the transition from things to ideas and vice versa, is mediated by God, as the unity in which oppositions are really contained, and hence resolved: "God is the union (*das Zusammenfassen*) of the two forms, their true living unity, but not as something which is above and superior with respect to the opposition, but rather in the form of duplicity, [understood] as one thing and the other, yet without everything that does not belong immediately to the essence, [that is to say] in itself" (p. 273). Geulincx transferred this concept to the field of ethics, by establishing a parallel between the actions of the soul and the movement of bodies guaranteed by divine causality, thus anticipating Leibniz's theory of pre-established harmony.

The history of philosophy culminates with the thought of Spinoza, which, for Schleiermacher, develops and completes Cartesian philosophy. We must be careful not to confuse the marginal aspects with those that are central; the marginal elements might lead us to think of Spinoza as dependent on the Kabbala or the Talmud, but the central elements are clearly Cartesian. The centre of the system is constituted by the idea of God, which Descartes had only sketched since he was more interested in real knowledge, but which had been developed and clarified by Malebranche and Geulincx, who denied the finite had any form of causality. Spinoza simply eliminated the Cartesian concept of "second order substances" and attributed all activity and causality to a single substance, distinct in *natura naturata* as the totality of things (modes) and in *natura naturans* as their productive force (attributes). On this basis, it is absurd to speak of Spinoza as an atheist, observes Schleiermacher, above all if the adjective "pious" is then used to describe Malebranche, who had a totally analogous concept of the divinity. An explanation for this accusation can be sought in Spinoza's inability to express himself mythically and poetically, which is the only way in which to define God in himself, as a separate totality: "God in himself, even though his being and his causality cannot essentially be separated, is however not both things, but the unity (*das Eins*) of the two. Spinoza is not even suited to dealing with unity in itself because of his aversion to the mythical and because of the unpoetic (*das unpoetische*) that derives from his search for clarity. From this also derives his lack of awareness of the need for a positive religion" (p. 278).

In his account of ethics, Spinoza like Geulincx and the Cartesians, is a "nominalist", that is to say, he proceeds from a personal I, where the principle of *conatus sese in esse suo conservandi* holds. Another decisive aspect, besides the assertion of the identity between intellect and will and the distinction between to be active and to be passive (*agere* and *pati*), is the principle that thought cannot defeat a passion by its truth, but only by becoming *affectio corporis*, that is, by increasing or decreasing the strength of the body. Two visions of the good derive from this: the good in itself as wisdom and the good in conflict with passion as virtue. Virtue consists of the elevation of man, in various degrees, to the love of God, but it reveals itself to be incoherent with respect to the starting point, since it is not possible to derive perfect

wisdom from an inadequate idea. Perfect wisdom is correctly described only when it is dealt with in itself, regardless of the “nominalist” point of view; it then appears as the capacity to see everything in God and to think it *sub specie aeternitatis*. All opposition between good and evil thus disappears because in God everything is good, and death too disappears, because wisdom is the contemplation of life.

The *Kurze Darstellung des spinozistischen Systems* is evidence that Schleiermacher took part in the dispute over Spinozism, which Jacobi had provoked with critical intent and which ended instead with the exaltation and revival of Spinoza by Romantic and idealist culture. It reveals that the foundations of Spinoza’s system are theological. It starts from a negative point of view and is based on the sceptic Cartesian proof that finite things cannot subsist separately. The essential characteristics of Spinoza’s idea of God derive from this: he cannot be defined by means of predicates that denote the nature of individual things and at the same time he cannot be dealt with in himself, separately from finite things: “That is to say, driven by the need to find the ultimate foundation of finite things, Spinoza found an infinite one, whose essence is pure existence; driven by the idea that the ultimate foundation of finite things cannot be outside them, he discovers that that infinite is not the perfect infinite whole, but that finite things must participate in its essence in a relationship of inherence” (p. 291). Thus, we have Spinoza’s theory, which Schleiermacher himself adopts: no God without the world, and no world without God. The comparison with Leibniz and Kant is carried out on the basis of this theory, and Spinoza emerges victorious (*siegreich*). Indeed, Leibniz’s God (the infinite monad) creates the world, finite monads, from which it is distinguished not by essence but by degree. Kant’s unconditioned, in turn, thought of as the foundation of the conditioned, can only be the total sum of the conditioned, while the use of the category of causality to explain a relationship of distinction is “the incoherent remains of ancient dogmatism” (p. 295). Schleiermacher thus reaches the conclusion that, if they had thought coherently on the basis of their own principles, Kant and Leibniz would have seen themselves as Spinozists.

2.1.4.4 One of the more interesting methodological aspects, clearly stated right from the *Einleitung*, is the prevalence of the historical over the speculative point of view. This principle is stated as regards Greek philosophy, which requires purely historical research (*eine reine historische Untersuchung*), aimed more at collecting (*zusammenstellend*) than judging (*beurteilend*); it is further stressed and explained with the observation that there is “much that is individual” in history, which is not easily reduced to schemes and general judgements. The historical point of view, however, as we have seen, requires a gathering together (*zusammenstellen*), an attention to the “totality”, which distinguishes it both from a distinctly philosophical perspective, which resolves every detail into “identity”, and from simple story telling, which limits itself to gathering up facts without any reference to a general vision.

It is now time to check the effectiveness of the methodological premises, which aim at avoiding the opposing dangers of creating a historiography dominated by speculative prejudices and a historiography which simply limits itself to recording

facts. Regarding the Eleatics, for example, Schleiermacher attempts to confute the traditional accusation of pantheism and mysticism by giving a detailed account of the thinkers (*durch die einzelne Darstellung*). Such an account sheds light on the contribution of the Eleatics to the elaboration of dialectic, both from the positive (and mythical) point of view in Xenophanes and Parmenides, and above all, from a negative point of view in Zeno and Parmenides. It is historically certain (*historisch gewiss*), Schleiermacher observes concerning Socrates, that he was the founder of systematic philosophy; but this conviction needs an explanation, because “apparently” he presents himself as a less systematic philosopher. The apparent contradiction is resolved if we take into account the fact that Socrates was the “first beginning” of the process of the systematization of philosophy and that this process is like biological evolution. Just as the seed contains successive development, but only in potency, so Socrates is the germ (*Keim*) of all subsequent philosophical systems: “the spirit, the character of all philosophy was in him; instead of its execution, its realisation, [there was] only the *Minimum*” (p. 81).

The biological framework constitutes the general vision, the frame of the historical picture in all its levels. Schleiermacher interprets history as a living organism (*ein lebendiges in sich Eines*), made up in turn of smaller organisms which determine it in its parts. Greek philosophy, for example, is described overall as a development from birth to death, from the emergence of a scientific vision within the ancient mythologies to the disappearance of philosophy itself as it became indistinct from theology at the time of the Neoplatonists. Each moment in its development has an organic character; hence the first period of Greek thought matures with Xenophanes and Parmenides (with the discovery of dialectic) and dies in the age of Sophism (because of an abuse of dialectic). There is also an interpretation of this kind of “Christian” philosophy, which is born in the patristic age, has its youth in scholasticism, and matures with modern philosophy in a strict sense. Each of these periods has its own birth, maturity, and death: birth is generally characterised by fragmentation, maturity by an awareness of unity and the distinction between the philosophical disciplines, and death by confusion and lack of distinction.

This framework of interpretation allows Schleiermacher to judge the various moment in the development of philosophy independently, and hence to praise some periods that had been criticised or ignored by other historians of philosophy. This is the case for the patristic and scholastic periods, which he deals with at length, as we have seen, above all through paradigmatic figures (such as Augustine and Aquinas), in whom Schleiermacher finds the central themes of modern philosophy. There is a negative side to this approach, however, as the final part of each period is usually considered one of decline and death, and this prevents Schleiermacher from correctly analysing several essential periods in the history of philosophy such as Sophists, Neoplatonism, or medieval nominalism.

Several factors combine to make the biological framework less abstract, however: attention to national characteristics and a comparative study of philosophy and literature in Greece. Given the link between the language and the culture of a people, Schleiermacher interprets the first period of Greek philosophy on the basis of the idea of fragmentation, which characterises both the relationship between the

various *poleis* and that between the different philosophical disciplines. Even more interesting is the search for a correspondence between the forms that they originally assume, first in mythology, and then in literature, and philosophy: “The difference between the Ionic and the Doric can already be seen in mythology. The theogonies are cosmological; natural forces are the moving forces (*das bewegende*) in epic too. Here too, observation of life offers an ethical element, but only a subordinate empirical element, gnomic poetry. The general side of knowledge presents itself in that which is given as a divinity, when it is dealt with in its being; the poetry of the hymns, therefore, is more Doric the more it represents this character. They are mysteries, because with them it is easier to join together the highest aspirations opposed to the common vision. And these are clearly followed by the Pythagoreans” (p. 24).

These observations, which show Schleiermacher’s sensitivity to ancient linguistics and literature, can be placed alongside other analogous observations concerning the medieval and modern age, though the latter tend more to reflect prejudice and commonplaces. One of these observations is undoubtedly that concerning the “frivolous nature” of the French which was already evident in the age of scholasticism, an idea repeated at the beginning of the account of modern philosophy: “Gradually the opposing national characteristics formed: the Germans began with the Absolute, the English and Italians with the empirical and partly the French, though they generally represent more the negative side; but this is still too recent” (p. 232). Despite this reservation, Schleiermacher believes, a little further on, that he has found the original form of German philosophy (*die ursprungliche Form deutscher Philosophie*) in the Kabbalistic tendency of Theophrastus Paracelsus and Jakob Böhme.

The aim of creating a “descriptive” historiography, in which seeing (*sehen*) prevails over judging (*urteilen*), as Schleiermacher explains right from the first words of the *Einleitung* (p. 15), is realised in particular in his careful and systematic use of the sources. These are clearly divided into the direct (fragments and works of the philosophers) and the indirect (ancient testimonies), and are again understood by means of the evolutionary biological framework: in the period of the pre-Socratics, philosophical literature is fragmentary as is characteristic of the youthful period; and maturity is represented by the works of Plato and Aristotle, which respectively form “the point of greatest unity and the point marking the beginning of the decline” (p. 21). The following period (Stoicism, Epicureanism, Eclecticism) reproduces the dispersion and fragmentation of the origins, because, as Schleiermacher observes, here too “in the history of literature the typology of the whole (*der Typus des Ganzen*) is revealed” (p. 21).

Schleiermacher does not limit himself to general questions but, when introducing each of the pre-Socratic philosophers, tackles specific problems regarding the fragments, which require sound linguistic competence to interpret, as well as a particular critical feeling (*das kritische Gefühl*). An example of this sensitivity is found at the beginning in the interpretation of the *ápeiron* of Anaximander. The use of this term for the first time in Anaximander, together with the term *arché*, is attested by Aristotle and Simplicius. Simplicius, notes Schleiermacher, uses it in a sense analogous to the principle of Thales and Anaximenes, as something intermediary between water and air, from which things originated. But the origin of reality according to

the explanation of Anaximander, quoted by Aristotle and confirmed by Cicero, leads to a different interpretation of *arché*, as the ultimate substrate of all reality, that which is permanent in the division and unification of beings: “If we add the oppositions that are found in the *ápeiron* and their reuniting in it of the similar (according to Theophrastus), and hence the presence in the *ápeiron* (but not in a temporal and visible way) of the ultimate and definite forms of being too, then we see that his *ápeiron* is the identity of unity and totality and he is clearly the father of speculative physics” (p. 31–32).

Schleiermacher provides a textual analysis of the whole of the history of philosophy, albeit within the limits of a text book, even though his sensitivity leads him to privilege the initial periods, in which philosophical thought was formed. The pre-Socratics, in fact, are given the same amount of space as all the rest of Greek philosophy, and patristic and scholastic philosophy is dealt with at greater length and depth than modern philosophy (74 pages compared to 52). When discussing modern philosophy, he chooses those works of a thinker that provide the outline of his thought and the main novelties, he lists the concepts, and attempts to grasp their significance in connection with the development of philosophy in that period. He hardly ever refers to previous histories of philosophy for the ancient period, sometimes for the medieval and modern period (above all Tennemann), but almost always critically. The origin of the process of development of thought is to be sought in the propulsive force of thought itself rather than in historical reasons or external circumstances, on which Enlightenment historians had long insisted, from Brucker to Tiedemann. In effect, Schleiermacher turns to historical causes only in the case of apparent anomalies of development, leaps or stagnation, which often mark the transition between the various philosophical perspectives. Historical circumstances become effective, and therefore worthy of being taken into consideration by the historian, when the philosophical spirit is weak, and then they contribute indirectly to its regeneration, accelerating its decline. This is the case of the age of Pericles and the Sophists, when certain political factors (the unification of Greece by Athens, democracy) led to the spread of scepticism on one hand and the end of pre-Socratic philosophy in a certain sense; but, at the same time, they created the conditions for Socratism, which originated a new course in the history of thought.

When looking at the question of how the philosophical spirit can be extinguished, Schleiermacher observes that the question is “not something to be explained, but something that has to be understood” (*nicht zu erklären, nur kann es aber verstehen*: p. 71). The *Erklärung* refers to an extrinsic explanation of the fact, understood as the effect of a cause of a different order. This is linked to a deterministic concept of the history of philosophy, which ends up by denying the independence of the development of philosophy itself, made to depend not on phenomena of the consciousness but empirical and non-philosophical factors. Schleiermacher points instead to a *verstehen*, an understanding of the process on the basis of which philosophy is formed and determined in its fundamental features, and onto which external causes and circumstances can graft themselves without modifying it in its essence. This is what happened in the period of the Sophists: “We found ancient philosophy one-sided and divided (*einseitig und zerspaltend*) and saw this separation as the consequence

of national separation. Every one-sided thing is changeable; it disappears with the conditions of one-sidedness and is reinforced by passing through nothing; this is how new culture arises from old. The Greek point of conjunction was Athens, destined to destroy the old philosophy and generate a new one. The more Athens emerged, the more the Ionic and Doric cities declined. Hence the crisis of philosophy coincided with its transition to Athens. Anaxagoras moved to Athens before the destruction of the Ionic colonies. The Dorics arrived and joined the great enterprise of the Persian war" (p. 71).

This is the only explicit link between the history of philosophy and political history; there are some other rare hints, such as the division of Europe into East and West in the High Middle Ages to explain another *Nullpunkt*, that which separates the patristic from the scholastic age. But the account usually follows an internal line of development, which depends on the nature of the philosophy and the relationship between its subject, aim, and methods. The chronological succession therefore comes to take on a subordinate role compared to an order which we could define as logical, in the sense that it reflects philosophical development from the inside. Characteristic here is the account of modern philosophy, where the succession within the "mystic" tendency creates some perplexity for anyone looking at it from a strictly historical viewpoint. As we have seen, the order is Descartes, Malebranche, Geulincx, and Spinoza. Malebranche comes before Spinoza, since his concept of the divinity represents a development of the Cartesian idea in a sense that can be found in Spinoza in full; and Geulincx comes after Malebranche and before Spinoza because he already contains the ethical determination of the Cartesian system, and hence comes even closer to Spinoza's system (p. 276).

2.1.5 The *Geschichte der Philosophie* was published posthumously in a fragmentary fashion and did not have an great impact on the historiography of the time (as Dilthey laments, II/1, p. 37). Schleiermacher's individual works on Greek philosophy, linked to his activity for the Berlin Academy of Sciences, and above all his translation of Plato, which continued to be published throughout the nineteenth century (and up to the present day), had generated a certain interest in an edition of his *Nachlass* concerning the history of philosophy, which was finally edited by Ritter. But these expectations were disappointed - as we can observe in one of the rare reviews which appeared - both because of the incomplete state of the material published, and because the treatment, above all that of modern philosophy, was not based on a detailed study of the sources. The *Kurze Darstellung des spinozistischen Systems*, which Ritter had intended as a completion of the *Geschichte der Philosophie* was not based on a reading of Spinoza, but rather on the account of him given by Jacobi (cfr. RGDL, XXI, 1839, pp. 537-538).

The works on the pre-Socratics had been received with great enthusiasm and had induced some of Schleiermacher's pupils, such as Boeckh and Brandis, to talk of "a new epoch" in the historiography of philosophy beginning with Schleiermacher (cf. above, pp. 13, 34-35). Very different was the verdict of Hegel, who identified the fundamental limit of these works in their exclusive tendency to search for detail and in erudition as an end in itself. Regarding the essay on Heraclitus, he speaks of the

“singular plan”, according to which the fragments had been ordered. The observation in which he credits Creuzer with “greater critical sense and linguistic competence” (the qualities which Schleiermacher valued the most) was venomous, and his conclusion was cutting: “Such collections are as a rule too wordy. They contain a huge amount of erudition and it is quicker to write them than to read them” (Michelet¹, I, p. 322; as for Fries’s verdict, see *Models*, III, p. 933). Hegel is even more severe, if possible, towards the translation of Plato. Not only does he fail to appreciate the critical examination of the authenticity of the various secondary dialogues, which is totally “superfluous and belongs to the hyper-criticism of our time” (Michelet¹, II, p. 20), but he denies the philosophical relevance of Platonism, which was Schleiermacher’s principal message.

Hegel’s judgements contributed to generating that lack of interest in Schleiermacher’s philosophy and historiography of philosophy which lasted up to his rediscovery by Dilthey and beyond (cf. Scholtz, *Die Philosophie Schleiermachers*, pp. 10–26). Even a historian of philosophy devoid of hostility, such as Eduard Zeller (whom some compare to Schleiermacher from a methodological point of view: cf. Guerout, II, pp. 491–503) was influenced by this climate and these judgements. In his *Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie seit Leibniz* (1873) Schleiermacher plays a secondary role, even though he is granted first place among the exponents of Schelling’s school “for his spiritual significance and for the profound and broad influence he exercised” (p. 606). But immediately after, Zeller echoes Hegel by stating: “Nevertheless he cannot be numbered among the philosophers of the highest degree, because for him too philosophy was not the highest task in life, but only a means for other aims, in the first place for his own personal spiritual education, and then for the foundation and account of his theological system” (p. 607).

Coherent with this judgement is the interpretation given by Zeller of Schleiermacher’s historiography of philosophy. In the essay *Die Geschichte der alten Philosophie in den letzverflossenen 50 Jahren* (1843), written when he started to study the history of ancient thought, Zeller places Schleiermacher and his pupils (Ritter, Brandis, and Hermann) in the ambit of the school of Schelling, since, if Kant’s philosophy had introduced the critical spirit into historiography, it was from Schelling that “the principle of organic historiography” derived (Zeller, p. 24). In this context, the role of Schleiermacher now changes: “Our science received a very fruitful impulse with respect to Schelling’s philosophy thanks to a man who, though he was also inspired by Schelling, was even more so by Kant, Jacobi, Fichte, and Spinoza. He knew how to gather together all the elements of the consciousness of the time in a genial and peculiar fashion, in an original and outstanding personality, thus attaining great significance not only for theology but also for philosophy and its history. Schleiermacher’s research on the various systems of the pre-Socratic age, above all Heraclitus, Anaximander, and Diogenes of Apollonia, are models of this type of work and are excellent not only for their detailed erudition, but also for their critical acumen, their perfect sense of characterization, and their profound forays into the peculiar concepts of each individual” (pp. 29–30).

The individual is what Schleiermacher knows how to treat properly, but not the totality, the entirety of the historical events of philosophy. Zeller insists at length on

this shortcoming, noting, however, that it is due to a deliberate choice made by Schleiermacher, who aimed to reach the essence of every historical phenomenon “not *a priori*, but as something individual”. But, objects Zeller, he will only be able to determine the periods of the development of philosophy on the basis of the formal aspect of their scientific character, namely, in an abstract and historically unacceptable way. The reason for this failure is made to depend on the lack of a philosophical perspective, the absence of an “objective” concept of reality. With Schleiermacher, the history of philosophy followed the path of detailed philological research, but it only became a philosophical science with Hegel, who (according to the young Zeller, who was still heavily influenced by Hegel) finally possessed a guiding idea, the “thinking spirit”, capable of “leading the individual to his principle and, vice versa, of developing the principle in the direction of the concrete particular” (p. 52).

Zeller’s interpretation, with the importance it places on Hegel in the establishment of the historiography of philosophy, created a framework which has been variously repeated up to the present day, by writers such as Antonio Banfi. Banfi’s aim was to find the “origin of the history of philosophy, as we understand it, as an independent discipline”, in an age prior to that of Hegel (between the Enlightenment and the romantic period). After quoting Schleiermacher among the thinkers of the period concerned with “guaranteeing the validity of their own thought with respect to the historical development of philosophy”, Banfi points to “the uncertainty of the dominant speculative criterion” which “upset the values, disturbed the shadows and light, and confused and absorbed the lines of theoretical development”, and he interprets Hegel’s history of philosophy as that which managed to overcome the romantic conception and made it real.⁴⁴

Still in the nineteenth century, Dilthey formulated another line of interpretation. He considered Schleiermacher to be one of the founders of modern historiography of philosophy, not in a subordinate position with respect to Hegel, a moment coming closer to the birth of the historiography of philosophy as a science. He represented, instead, together with Hegel, a new line of study of the history of philosophy which was to continue throughout the nineteenth century, marking a clear break from the perspective of Brucker, Tiedemann, and Tennemann. Hegel and Schleiermacher expressed different points of view and used different types of methodology, but they can be reconciled (cf. Dilthey, II/1, p. 46). Their two methodologies can be described as follows: 1. From a conception of the development of humanity Hegel proceeds to the study of the individual, while Schleiermacher considers the individual work of the individual philosopher first and then moves towards an understanding of the whole; 2. Hegel sets out the products of historical and

⁴⁴ Cf. Banfi, pp. 119–123. The picture which Banfi paints of romantic and idealistic historiography is mostly based on the essay by Heß, *Das romantische Bild*, which appeared in “Kant-Studien” in 1926. The image of Schleiermacher’s historiography recently put forward by Gadamer in his work on the history of the interpretation of the pre-Socratics is not that different: “the reawakening of the historical sense” attributed to Schleiermacher was clearly expressed in Hegel’s historiography of philosophy, “which soon began to dominate everything philosophically” (Gadamer, *I Presocratici*, p. 32).

cultural activity in a linear sequence of increasing value, while Schleiermacher sees them in a process of differentiation in which each remains independent; 3. finally, while for Hegel the great philosophical systems are representations of the spirit of a certain age, Schleiermacher looks for the atemporal determinations of the universal system of concepts or, as Dilthey expressed it, the universal systematic (*Weltsystematik*).

Dilthey then proceeds to analyse this concept at length, since in his interpretation it represents the basis of Schleiermacher's historiography of philosophy. The history of philosophy is an organism understood as "the development, by means of the real sciences and starting from the consciousness of God, of the conceptual principles contained in the spirit up to the universal systematic" (p. 47). If, as Dilthey states, citing the *Dialektik*, reason is "the living totality of the schematism of concepts", there is a single "natural" system, which manifests itself in infinite forms in historical systems and never completely fulfils itself. We must not look for a development in the history of philosophy, therefore, but rather the emergence at different times of characteristics and functions that are already contained and presupposed in human reason. Schleiermacher does admit one form of development, however, albeit in a highly fragmentary fashion according to Dilthey, and it concerns dialectic: dialectic grants pre-eminence to religious consciousness compared to empirical consciousness, while at the same time recognising the concept of the world (*Weltbegriff*), developed by the sciences, as the necessary condition for the progress of this religious consciousness. Schleiermacher could have used this the principle, which Comte recognised, to deduce the connection of the history of philosophy with the history of experimental science. He does not go this far; nevertheless, he does derive "the right consequence" from the relativity of every degree of development and the infinity of progress, since the process of philosophy is always linked to real knowledge.

The possibilities of this type of historiography, which aims to reconstruct the system of fundamental philosophical concepts on a historical basis, were partly put into practice by Dilthey himself, who assimilated the point of view of the romantic thinker in this field too. In this way, the foundations were laid for a reappraisal of Schleiermacher's historiography of philosophy, which Lucien Braun did not hesitate to define as topical, as well as original (cf. Braun, p. 322). The new perspective embraces the following themes, which are still at the centre of interest and debate today: the problem of translation and interpretation, the relationship between philosophy and language, the question of the individuality of the philosophers, and finally the reciprocal belonging of the philosophical and the poetic. The theory underpinning the history of philosophy can be found in hermeneutics, which is in turn based on the principle of individuality as the original experience of listening, which is neither a theoretical nor a practical reason, but rather an aesthetic reason (the part dealing with Schleiermacher is significantly placed at the end of the chapter entitled, 'La vision romantique de l'histoire de la philosophie', pp. 261–325). Primacy is thus given to the divinatory method rather than the comparative method, and the psychological form of interpretation rather than the grammatical form. From a historiographical point of view, according to Braun, this places greater

attention on the philosophers rather than the philosophies, thus reliving the experience of the great philosophers of their relationship with the mystery of the world and God, in intimate union and participation (cf. Braun, p. 317).

The scholar who gave greatest credit to Schleiermacher as a historian of philosophy, besides Dilthey, was Martial Gueroult. The chapter entitled ‘Schleiermacher et son influence sur l’historiographie philosophique’ (Gueroult, II, pp. 481–503) is based on a comparison with Hegel, all to Schleiermacher’s advantage: “It was the movement created by Schleiermacher which was to lead to the most constructive criticism of *a priori* claims in general, and those of Hegel in particular [...] His solid erudition, united with his critical acumen and an innate sense of the originality of each writer, allow him to penetrate deeply into the specific way of seeing and conceiving which was typical of the different writers” (p. 481). On one hand we have Hegel, therefore, who championed the rights of philosophy against history, and on the other Schleiermacher, who stressed the need to understand philosophy historically. But if the subject of history is the singular, this cannot be understood unless it is placed within the connection of the whole. Schleiermacher is fully convinced of this. Historiography proceeds from the parts to the whole, but it preserves these two poles of reference which remain autonomous; the philosophical method leads instead to the deceptive identity of the parts with the whole, making the individual element in its uniqueness disappear. For Gueroult, the most ‘productive’ of the two positions would seem to be that of Schleiermacher, which, rejecting all historical systems in favour of an “internal” understanding of the original experience which gave rise to the various philosophies, seduced historians of philosophy and philosophers, from Trendelenburg to Zeller, Dilthey, and Jaspers (cf. Gueroult, II, pp. 485–486).

To be closed within an excessive subjectivism, notes Gueroult, certainly involves the risk of losing sight of the teachings in favour of an exclusively psychological interest, and of directing the attention of the historian more to the philosophers than to their philosophies. But Schleiermacher also managed to grasp the “trans-objective element” of philosophy – in itself atemporal – admitting with Plato the unity of the system of the world and the system of knowledge, and he was thus able to identify a logical systematic which is progressively conceptualized. This interest for the objective aspect of systems is expressed in particular in the characterization of Greek thought and in the periodization, where Schleiermacher makes rigorous use of that “formal criticism” of systems that Zeller had seen as being abstract and anti-historical. Gueroult again defends Schleiermacher’s methodology, showing its effectiveness and its superiority (even compared to Dilthey’s view), since it safeguards both poles of the object of the history of philosophy, the historical and the philosophical, avoiding the risk of a simple reduction of the one to the other: “Now, the opposition that separates Schleiermacher’s two concepts, which he has not attempted to resolve, reveals in him an awareness that two opposite elements must be united in every philosophy, that is, historicity and the atemporal absolute. By bringing historicism to a paroxysm, Dilthey has swallowed the latter into the former. Jaspers can take credit for exalting the former, on the other hand, restoring the latter to the service of the individual, and thus reconciling it with the former. But this

reconciliation was only to be possible by removing the notion of progress" (Gueroult, II, p. 489).

Unlike Hegel's solution, which goes beyond the antinomy of philosophy and the history of philosophy by identifying the historical process with the process of the logical development of the idea, there remains in Schleiermacher's theory and methodology a gap between the two poles of the circle which is never fully closed. Schleiermacher's solution is problematic, therefore, as it is based on the structural openness of the hermeneutical circle and the consequent recognition of the historicity of philosophy. It neither rises nor fulfils itself on the level of pure abstract speculation, but becomes a concrete working methodology in the inter-subjective dimension of communication. The linguistic form which philosophical research takes on is therefore not an accident or an extrinsic factor, but the unavoidable condition in which all human striving towards the truth comes into being and reveals itself; and philosophy consists precisely in this tension towards the truth rather than in the full possession of it.

The historical reality of philosophy cannot therefore be grasped by means of a speculative procedure which works on the level of abstract reason and does not take into account personal or historical conditions; neither can it be reached by the empirical or descriptive method, which does not take into account the universal or rational meaning of each individual element. It is not the *a priori* construction of history therefore, nor simple empiricism, but neither is it a synthesis of the two points of view, which would annul the specific nature and the autonomy of both. The true historical method takes place, in an analogy with the movement typical of interpretation, in the infinite process of cross-referencing of the whole and the parts, of philosophizing (universal), which deepens its meaning by reflecting itself in the historical (individual), and vice versa. The object of history, however, is always the individual, whose meaning must be found by placing it progressively into the whole of which it is a part. What is interesting about this is not so much that it shows the possibility of finding a solution to the fundamental theoretical problem implicit in the concept of the history of philosophy, but that it clearly indicates the line of historiographical research, which, albeit incomplete because it is impossible to fully reach the individual by way of concepts, attempts to clarify the individual in his meaning, by making him come alive as something concrete and real. Historical knowledge does not take the form of a set of intuitive and divinatory acts, but is a gradual coming into contact with a far off and often foreign world, and it manages to represent it in its living existence and to enjoy it intimately, by establishing a communicative relationship with it.

2.1.6 For a general bibliography cf. Totok, pp. 204–211; see also: *Schleiermacher: Interpretation und Kritik*, ed. by B. Gerner (Munich, 1971); S. Sorrentino, *Schleiermacher e la filosofia della religione* (Brescia, 1978); A. Arndt, *Friedrich Schleiermacher zum 150. Todestag: Handschriften und Drucke* (Berlin, 1984); Id., *Schleiermachers Briefwechsel: nebst einer Liste seiner Vorlesungen*, (Berlin and New York, 1992); G. Scholtz, *Die Philosophie Schleiermachers* (Darmstadt, 1984); T.H. Tice, *Schleiermacher Bibliography (1784–1984). Updating and Commentar*

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We also point out some collective volumes containing several articles on hermeneutical theory and Schleiermacher's philosophical thought: *Schleiermacher as Contemporary*, ed. by W. Funk (New York, 1970); *Schleiermacher*, in *Archivio di filosofia*, LII (1984); *Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834). Theologe-Philosoph-Pädagoge*, ed. by D. Lange (Göttingen, 1985); H.J. Birkner, H. Kimmerle, and G. Moretto, *Schleiermacher filosofo* (Naples, 1985); *Schleiermacher-Archiv*, ed. by K.-V. Selge (Berlin, 1985) [Acts of the *Internationaler Schleiermacher-Kongress Berlin 1984*]; *Schleiermacher e la modernità*, ed. by S. Rostagno (Turin, 1986); *F.D.E Schleiermacher (1768–1834) fra teologia e filosofia*, ed. by G. Penzo and M. Farina (Brescia and Trento, 1990); T. Seruya and J.M. Justo, *Rereading Schleiermacher: Translation, Cognition, and Culture* (Berlin and Heidelberg, 2015). On hermeneutics see the general bibliography above (pp. 47–49).

For Schleiermacher's historiography of philosophy, cf. Zeller, pp. 29–40; Dilthey, II/I, pp. 47–59; Gueroult, II, pp. 481–489; Geldsetzer, pp. 70–77; Braun, pp. 310–322. On individual aspects of his historiography (but mostly on his interpretation of Plato) cf. W. Dilthey, 'Schleiermachers Uebersetzung des Platon', in Dilthey, I/2, pp. 37–75; T. Camerer, *Spinoza und Schleiermacher. Die kritische Lösung des von Spinoza hinterlassenen Problems* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1903); H. Mulert, 'Schleiermacher über Spinoza und Jacobi', *Chronicon Spinozianum*, III (1923), pp. 195–316; W. Jaeger, 'Der Wandel des Platonbildes im 19. Jahrhundert', in Id., *Humanistische Reden und Vorträge*, (Berlin und Leipzig, 1937), pp. 138–152; W. Sommer, 'Cusanus und Schleiermacher', *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, XII (1970), pp. 85–102; H.-G. Gadamer, *I Presocratici*, pp. 23–32; Id., 'Schleiermacher als Platoniker', in Id., *Kleine Schriften*, III, (Tübingen, 1972), pp. 141–149; J.-L. Vieillard-Baron, *Platon et l'idéalisme allemand (1777–1830)*, (Paris, 1979), pp. 207–217; H. Krämer, *Plato and the Foundations of Metaphysics*, transl. by J.R. Catan (Albany, NY, 1990); G. Moretto, 'Platonismo e romanticismo. Platone nei "Discorsi sulla religione" di Schleiermacher', in *Schleiermacher* (1984), pp. 233–269; C. Cesa, 'Schleiermacher critico dell'etica di Kant e di Fichte. Spunti dalle *Grundlinien*', *Ibid.*, pp. 19–34; G. Moretto, 'L'Eraclito di Schleiermacher', in *Atti del Symposium Heracliteum 1981*, ed. by L. Rossetti (Rome, 1984), II, pp. 77–104; F. Christ, 'Schleiermacher

zum Verhältnis von Mithos und Logos bei Platon', in *Schleiermacher-Archiv*, II (1985), pp. 837–848; G. Scholtz, 'Schleiermacher und die platonische Ideenlehre', *ibid.*, pp. 849–871; G. Moretto, 'Religione estetica e religione teleologica. Ebraismo, ellenismo e cristianesimo nell'interpretazione di Schleiermacher', in *Ebraismo, ellenismo, cristianesimo*. Atti del Colloquio internazionale [...], *Archivio di filosofia*, LIII (1985), 2–3, pp. 51–72; G. Moretto, 'Schleiermacher e i presocratici', in *Schleiermacher filosofo*, pp. 57–86; M.G. Lombardo, *La regola del giudizio. La deduzione trascendentale nella dialettica e nell'etica di Fr. Schleiermacher* (Milan, 1990), pp. 51–61 (on his interpretation of Plato); A. Neschke-Hentschke, 'Platonisme et tournant herméneutique au début du XIXe siècle en Allemagne', in *La naissance du paradigme herméneutique. De Kant et Schleiermacher à Dilthey*, ed. by A. Lask, A. Neschke-Hentschke, Chr. Berner, and J. Quillien (Lille, 1990 [2nd ed. 2008]), pp. 121–153; Id., 'Le texte de Platon entre F.A. Wolf (1759–1824) et F.D. Schleiermacher (1767–1834)', *ibid.*, pp. 245–276; A. Laks, 'Platonisme et système chez Schleiermacher: des *Grundlinien* à la *Dialectique*', *ibid.*, pp. 155–181; U. Zimbrich, 'Un état étrangement imaginé. La *République* de Platon d'après Schleiermacher', *ibid.*, pp. 225–244; W. R. Mann, 'The Origins of the Modern Historiography of Ancient Philosophy', *History and Theorie*, XXXV (1996), 2, pp. 165–195; A.L. Siani, 'Ai principi dell'ermeneutica e della storiografia filosofica: nota su Brucker e Schleiermacher', *Historia philosophica*, III (2005), pp. 125–131; M.N. Forster, 'The History of Philosophy', in *The Cambridge History of the Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century (1790–1870)* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 263–292; G. Scholtz, 'Platonforschung und hermeneutische Reflexion bei Schleiermacher', in *Argumenta in dialogos Platonis*, Theil 2: *Platoninterpretation und die Hermeneutik vom 19. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. by M. Erler und A. Neschke-Hentschke (Basel 2012), pp. 81–101; F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Introduction aux dialogues de Platon (1804–1828). Leçons d'histoire de la philosophie (1819–1823). Suivies des textes de Friedrich Schlegel relatifs à Platon*, transl. by M.-D. Richard (Paris, 2014).

2.2 August Heinrich Ritter (1791–1869)

Geschichte der Philosophie

2.2.1 August Heinrich Ritter was born on 21st November, 1791, in Zerbst/Anhalt. He studied philosophy and theology in Halle and Göttingen, then, from 1811 to 1816, in Berlin, where he came under the decisive influence of Schleiermacher. After he obtained his doctorate from Halle, he qualified to become a university lecturer in Berlin in 1817 with a dissertation entitled *Ueber die Bildung des Philosophen durch die Geschichte der Philosophie* which clearly showed that historiography would be his future field of study. He held his first lectures on logic and the history of philosophy in Berlin and in 1832 became a member of the Prussian Academy of Sciences. Ritter's university career continued with his appointment as full professor

of philosophy in Kiel in 1833 and, four years later, with his move to the prestigious University of Göttingen, where he taught for 32 years until his death, on 3 February, 1869. His fame is linked to historiography, while his work on philosophy is usually considered to be less important, based on a tendency to reconcile philosophy and theology and a certain eclecticism, though the influence of Schleiermacher is still dominant.

2.2.2 Ritter's vocation for the historiography of philosophy is revealed in his very first works. His first printed essay (which was awarded a prize by the Berlin Academy of Sciences) was on the theme of the relationship between Spinozism and Cartesianism: *Welchen Einfluss hat die Philosophie des Cartesius auf die Ausbildung der des Spinoza gehabt, und welche Berührungspunkte haben beide Philosophien mit einander gemein?* (Leipzig und Altenburg, 1817) (as an appendix, pp. 85–120, is the dissertation mentioned above, *Ueber die Bildung des Philosophen*). The essay argues in favour of Schleiermacher's theory of the continuity (in the sense of extension and deepening) of the Cartesian system in Spinoza. Ritter's other early historical works were also influenced by Schleiermacher, in particular his interest for the pre-Socratics: 'Ueber die Lehre des Empedokles', *Literarische Analekten* (journal edited by F.A. Wolf), Berlin, 1820; *Geschichte der jonischen Philosophie* (Berlin, 1821); *Geschichte der pythagoreischen Philosophie* (Hamburg, 1826); 'Ueber die Philosophie der megarischen Schule', *Rheinische Museum für Philologie, Geschichte und griechische Philosophie* (journal edited by A. Boeckh, B.G. Niebuhr, and C.A. Brandis), Bonn 1828. We can also add the review of the new edition of volume I of Tennemann's *Geschichte* (see *Models*, III, p. 917).

These works were a preparation for the great history of philosophy in 12 volumes that it took Ritter 25 years to write. The *Geschichte der Philosophie* is made up of two parts, which deal respectively with ancient and Christian philosophy. The first is divided into 4 volumes: *Geschichte der Philosophie alter Zeit*, Erster Theil (Hamburg: bei Friedrich Perthes, 1829); the other volumes were printed in 1830, 1831, and 1834. A second edition came out between 1836 and 1839, and there was a French (ed. C.-J. Tissot, Paris, 1835–1836, 4 vols) and an English translation (ed. A.J.W. Morrison, Oxford, 1838–1846, 4 vols) of the first edition. In this period, Ritter worked together with Preller on an anthology of fragments and texts concerning ancient philosophy: *Historia philosophiae Graeco-Romanae ex fontium locis contexta: Locos collegerunt, disposuerunt, notis auxerunt* H. Ritter, L. Preller (Hamburg, 1838). 3 vols.

The second part of the *Geschichte der Philosophie*, which includes patristic, medieval, and modern philosophy, which Ritter collectively calls "Christian", is dealt with in 8 volumes: *Geschichte der christlichen Philosophie* (Hamburg: bei Friedrich Perthes, 1841–1853). There are two different French translations: the first entitled *Histoire de la philosophie chrétienne* (by J. Trullard, Paris 1843–1844, 2 vols), contains patristic philosophy; and the second, entitled *Histoire de la philosophie moderne* (by P. Challemlacour, Paris 1861, 3 vols), corresponds to the last two volumes of the *Geschichte* and begins with the chapter on Descartes. Ritter later

edited a shorter presentation of medieval and modern philosophy, and even dealt with post-Kantian thought: *Die christliche Philosophie nach ihrem Begriffe, ihren äusseren Verhältnissen und ihrer Geschichte bis auf die neuesten Zeiten* (Göttingen, 1858), 2 vols.

Besides his principle work, Ritter also undertook research into more limited subjects, concerning the philosophy of his own age above all: *Die Halb-Kantianer und der Pantheismus. Eine Streitschrift, veranlasst durch Meinungen der Zeit und bei Gelegenheit von Jäsche Schrift über den Pantheismus* (Berlin, 1827); *Ueber unsere Kenntniss der arabischen Philosophie und besonders über die philosophie der orthodoxen arabischen Dogmatiker* (Göttingen, 1844); *Ueber Lessing's philosophische und religiöse Grundsätze* (Göttingen, 1847); *Ueber die Emanationslehre* (Göttingen, 1847); *Versuch zur Verständigung über die neueste deutsche Philosophie seit Kant* (Braunschweig, 1853); *Ernst Renan über die Naturwissenschaften und die Geschichte mit den Randbemerkungen eines deutschen Philosophen* (Gotha, 1865); and *An Leopold von Ranke über deutsche Geschichtsschreibung. Ein offener Brief* (Leipzig, 1867). These works are interesting not only because they illustrate Ritter's view of the significance of the philosophical systems which arose after Kant (which were not included in the *Geschichte der Philosophie*), but also because they explain his speculative position more clearly.

Ritter's philosophical works were mostly destined for University consumption. They are short dissertations or systematic works, written over long periods of time and thus suited to illustrating his theoretical ideas. He began with a treatise on logic in its conjunction with metaphysics, followed by a series of essays on ethics or aesthetics, and ended with an encyclopaedia of the philosophical sciences: *Vorlesungen zur Einleitung in die Logik* (Berlin, 1823); *Abriss der philosophischen Logik* (Berlin, 1824); *Ueber das Verhältnis der Philosophie zum wissenschaftlichen Leben* (Berlin, 1835); *Ueber die Erkenntnis Gottes in der Welt* (Hamburg, 1836); *Ueber das Böse und seine Folgen* (Kiel, 1839); *Kleine philosophische Schriften*, 2 vols (Kiel, 1839) [a collection of essays on philosophy of law, aesthetics, and psychology]; *Ueber die Principien der Aesthetik* (Kiel, 1840); *Unsterblichkeit* (Leipzig, 1851); *System der Logik und Metaphysik* (Göttingen, 1856); *Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, 3 vols (Göttingen, 1862–64); *Philosophische Paradoxa* (Leipzig, 1867).

From a theoretical point of view, there are no substantial changes in Ritter's position, clearly aligned with Schleiermacher and critical (less so over time) of Hegelian philosophy. The major themes of one of his first works, the *Abriss der philosophischen Logik*, are the idealist theory of the unity of logic and metaphysics (the former the science of "thinking" and the latter the science of "being") on one hand, as both are based on the same concept of "knowledge"; and on the other, the inability of reason to fully attain this basis, making philosophy simply the "aspiration to knowledge" moving towards science and system, but never becoming an "absolute" science or system. Ritter was keenly aware of the limit of philosophy. It can never attain primacy among the sciences: "it is one element of culture among others", he states in the *Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (I, p. 6). The *Abriss der philosophischen Logik* ends significantly by moving from philosophy back to

religion, which by placing reason in a vital relationship with the divinity, thus gives it a foundation and determines it in its individuality.

2.2.3 Ritter made significant comments on the concept of the history of philosophy in the 'Vorrede' and the 'Einleitung' to the first volume of the *Geschichte der Philosophie*, as well as in his youthful essay *Ueber die Bildung des Philosophen durch die Geschichte der Philosophie*, clearly written under the influence of Schleiermacher. In the 'Vorrede' Ritter immediately presents himself as the representative of an age that rediscovered the value of history for understanding the present. "There was a time", he observes at the beginning, "in which erudition and history were considered to be useless, and everyone was busy destroying old prejudices and ancient doctrines. Yet we must be grateful for the teaching that we have received from our predecessors. Indeed, the past offers us fundamental teaching, which directly concerns the present in its vital experience, as long as we are able to somehow isolate ourselves from it in order to understand it in itself: "We can only receive fundamental teaching from antiquity if we decide to abandon the life of the present every now and then and look for antiquity in itself. Only this isolation from the present can lead us to profoundly live the present itself. We can only experience our time if we relive within ourselves (*in unserm Innern durchleben*) the experiences through which our time has become; we relive them more rapidly as humanity has experienced them, because it has had to overcome the obstacles of nature, while we overcome the same obstacles in representation only. In general, this is the nature of the teaching, which allows us to experience more quickly that which it took the inventors longer to achieve. Thus, the more ancient the period of time is, the more we need teaching and erudition" ('Vorrede', I, pp. VII-VIII).

Although he does not want to write a treatise specifically on the concept of the history of philosophy, in the *Einleitung* Ritter presents the fundamental concepts that have guided him in his work. He begins by stressing the place that the historiography of philosophy must have in the context of historiography in general. The history of philosophy is part of the history of humanity and, since the part must be understood in relation to the whole, the historian of philosophy must be aware of the whole (that is to say, the history of civilization, peoples, customs, and arts) in order for him to correctly contextualize his subject. Ritter had already dealt with this relationship at length in the essay *Ueber die Bildung des Philosophen*, which began by distinguishing between history and philosophy. History is based on experience, which considers things in their singularity and multiplicity; philosophy instead is based on the intellect, which seeks unity and that which is general. Philosophy, which deals with concepts, is only apparently superior to historiography, which deals with individual phenomena. In reality, observes Ritter, only within the context of a knowledge of the particular is it possible to arrive at the internal constitution of objects, their vital force, while knowledge of the general is abstract. Hence history, which deals with "the living development of things", is superior to philosophy, which deals with the concepts of properties which do not in themselves have any being separate from the individual existence of beings (*Ueber die Bildung des Philosophen*, p. 88).

History has its own place in the context of the sciences and its own dignity. It is not subordinate to philosophy; if anything, the opposite is true. Indeed, if it does not want to remain abstract knowledge (*das Wissen für sich*), but become knowledge in relation to action (*das Wissen in Beziehung auf das Thun*), philosophy has no choice but to connect itself to history, which studies “the living development of things”. This connection is in truth problematic because historical knowledge will never become philosophical knowledge, and vice versa, because they are not separated by a difference of degree but by “complete opposition”. They present themselves however as two poles which, in their difference, refer to one another and comprehend one on the basis of the other, according to Schleiermacher’s theory of dialectic and hermeneutics.

Every form of knowledge contains the dialectical relationship between the particular and the general, and this is true above all for history. History, as we have seen, aims at a knowledge of the life of things in two ways: the first, that of phenomena, leads to the higher level to grasp the vital force of things. Now, it is possible to reach this force, which is an intrinsic property, only if we free the object from its external empirical constitution, by comparing it to what in us is homogenous (*Gleichartiges*) with the productive force of the object. The process of the reduction of the object to the subject, in turn, involves a liberation from the limitations of subjectivity, which is always empirically determined. Indeed, re-producing that which is living outside of us within us is a productive spiritual exercise (*eine Geistesübung*) which allow us to overcome the limits of our life and understand it more completely (pp. 96–97). By then connecting the forces that determine the life of the individual, that of the people, and that of all civilizations, we end up by enunciating the philosophical principles that are at the basis of the history of humanity and are in turn based on the “community” of human nature. The key to all historical research is this connection between the objective and the subjective, the empirical and the intellective, made possible by the homogeneity of man’s internal world with the external world in its dynamic constitution. The linking of empirical history with the science of humanity represents therefore the supreme ideal of historical research and its highest dignity.

The history of philosophy has the same relationship with philosophy. Just as the science of humanity comes before historiography, in so far as it contains its foundations (and indeed in interpretation it is necessary to presuppose the whole in order to understand the parts, even if the whole is then understood on the basis of the parts), so philosophy must, to a certain extent, precede historical knowledge (pp. 100–101). Ritter seems to have thus reversed the relationship between philosophy and the history of philosophy with respect to his earlier statements, now giving primacy to philosophy, both because it deals with the truth rather than error, and because it contains the condition for understanding error and everything that belongs to history. He immediately clarifies the nature of error, however, which is not purely negative because it does not express the absence or the opposite of truth, but is a partial or incomplete representation of it. A further limit to the primacy of philosophy derives from the different type of relationship it has with the two forms of the historiography of philosophy, which we could define with contemporary

terminology (cf. Brandis and Hegel), as “external” and “internal”. External historiography concerns the simple transmission of doctrines dealt with as isolated phenomena, without any concern to find their internal driving force and their connection with the entire system of knowledge. This type of historiography is independent of philosophy and can precede it; nevertheless, though it is based on exteriority, it is not something useless as it represents the necessary introduction to “internal” (or second degree) historiography, which grasps doctrines in their connection with philosophy. There is a dialectic relationship between the two methods: “all our knowledge proceeds as follows: first the external experience creates an impulse for internal knowledge and then from the experience of this knowledge in us we come back to the living intuition of the same forces outside us [...] Thus history urges us to exercise our forces in a multiform way. The conditions of action are variously given in history; and by identifying ourselves with history, we take possession of these conditions and through our lives in history we rise above the conditions of our external life” (pp. 103–104).

The importance and the autonomy which Ritter grants external history clearly distances him from Hegel. For Hegel, in fact, external history is totally inadequate for the formation of philosophical science, while the internal history of philosophy comes to coincide with philosophy itself. For Ritter too, internal history (or the history of living forces) depends on philosophy, that is, on the expression of those living forces within us; but external history does not depend equally directly on it, because, as we have seen, it acts as a stimulus for philosophy, setting it on the road to truth by focusing on errors (or partial truths) that have so far occupied the field of human research. But the greatest difference, which explains the different meaning given to external historiography, concerns the very concept of philosophy itself. If, according to Hegel’s theory, we hold that philosophy is not merely the pursuit but the effective possession of the truth, it is impossible to justify a real interest in those attempts of philosophical research which did not actually attain the truth. If, on the other hand, we are convinced that philosophy cannot achieve full and definitive possession of the truth, but only aspire to come near to it (and for Ritter philosophy is *ein Streben nach Wissen*, never a complete system of truth), then every step in this direction, even if it is a wrong step, must be considered as a step in the process of the formation of the philosophical spirit. From this point of view, error has a positive philosophical importance, “because on the basis of the opinion that all philosophy consists only of approaching the truth we are forced to admit that at no point can the truth be proved absolutely. The elimination of error is therefore never complete and it seems that in the history of philosophy we can easily come to find error, but not to find the truth” (p. 104).

Even though it does not identify itself with philosophy, the history of philosophy has an essential relationship with philosophy, since external history must finally transform itself into internal history in the search for the vital forces that have animated it and brought it to the state in which it has reached us. A definition or, at least, a preliminary agreement on the meaning of philosophy is needed, and this is the major theme of the *Einleitung* to the *Geschichte der Philosophie* (I, pp. 3–34). Some have argued for the need to avoid a preliminary definition of philosophy,

observes Ritter, probably referring to the debate around the end of the eighteenth century between Tiedemann and the Kantians (cf. *Models*, III, pp. 650–653); but this is an unfounded opinion, first of all because the field of the philosophical cannot be determined unless it is by means of an appropriate definition, and secondly because the historian cannot in any case free himself of his own philosophical position. It is not an easy question to resolve, as it is necessary to avoid the dangers of excessively rigid definitions, which would limit the field of philosophy too much, and excessively general ones, which would enlarge it out of all proportion.

Philosophy has always tried to submit the facts of experience to reason and to convert into solid scientific results that which otherwise would be mere opinion. Philosophy consists in this transition from opinion to science: a characterization of knowledge based on form rather than content, therefore. “Certainly not everyone recognises that philosophy is a science, but neither they who consider it an art nor they who treat it as the immediate intellection of individual rational ideas can shake our conviction, even more so given that we always find the tendency to science in the history of philosophy. We must rather regard those opinions as only the expression of the controversy against the failed attempts to ascertain the scientific nature of philosophy” (I, p. 7). There are two constituent elements of philosophy: firstly, the tendency towards science - not the possession of it, but the movement towards it; and secondly a relationship of a formal nature, namely the scientific relationship between objects, such as to comprehend “the entire ambit of knowledge” (*das ganze Gebiet des Wissens*). We now have some criteria for distinguishing philosophy from similar fields, such as religion, poetry, and the particular sciences. Philosophy is different from religion because it is mediate (conceptual) knowledge, and it distinguishes itself from poetry because it creates a connection of a general nature between objects, based on the intellect. But it is above all in the domain of the sciences that, for Ritter, we should take care to separate philosophical discourse because here there is the greatest possibility of confusion. Scientific connection is common to both ambits, but in philosophy it must be devoid of empirical reference as well as being systematic and general. Philosophy and the sciences can follow the same method and initially have the same contents, but in the end philosophy looks like “a pure product of reason” (*ein reines Erzeugnis der Vernunft*). If we remember that philosophy is always in a state of becoming, we will never see it finalized as a system, even though it does tend to constitute itself as a system.

Reflection on the concept of philosophy has an essentially methodological sense, functioning as a guide to the historian in his work. Ritter intends to overcome the two opposite tendencies that he believed dominated his time. Some historians claim to limit themselves to presenting the facts in their multiplicity, without adding any principles that might unite or connect them together; others attempt to lead the whole of history back to a single point of view imposed *a priori*. Ritter reacted in particular to this second kind of methodology, which was defended at the time by Hegel. The idea of the construction of history (*die Construction der Geschichte*) is right in itself, as it expresses the need to find principles that can explain facts that would otherwise be blind. But we must avoid the danger of confusing the historical method with the philosophical method. A history can be described as “constructed”

when it is deduced from the idea of its object according to a speculative method typical of the philosophy of history, which traces the history of humanity from the idea of a perfectly realized humanity. The mistake is not in the construction, but in the assumption that the idea on which it rests is something final and complete. But even without this dogmatic assumption the philosophical procedure is abstract and inadequate from a historical point of view: "We do not wish to deny that something can also be derived from an imperfect concept; deduction is not the job of history but rather, if anything, of speculation. The procedure can be reduced to the following model: in order to achieve their destiny, humanity or reason must, in general, pass through certain periods and modes of development, whose meaning can be given more precisely on the basis of that which is contained in the concept of rational development. This is clearly not historical research, but it will precede history. We might therefore ask ourselves, how can history be connected to this? We could say that, after certain periods have been established in the way indicated, we could show historically how what had to happen actually happened. But it seems to me that with this we are doing something completely useless. Indeed, to what end? Perhaps it is to dress up in flesh and blood, so to speak, something that derives from an idea, and to find proper names for the periods and their founders" (I, pp. 19–20).

At the root of the rejection of the so-called construction of history is the distinction between history and philosophy which we spoke of above. History, observes Ritter, gives us the idea of humanity, taking it from the study of the forms in which the actual development of humanity took place, without attempting to externally connect this development to the idea, but making it in some way "enter inside" it. On one hand, we have history with its object, which is concrete, real, living development; on the other, the general and the abstract, which philosophy studies by removing it from the plane of existence. From this point of view, Ritter reaffirms the primacy of history over philosophy: "Hence the many general treatises on history and the construction of history have no other advantage than that of being conclusive, systematic, general treatises. We must not favour this comfortable tendency, this uncertain faith, this oblivion of ourselves. The general model is always a dead one; the life that history can guarantee acts in us at every moment of our existence, it generates in us the thought of a whole in every form of individual development" (I, p. 22).

The fundamental concept which allows us to conceive of connecting the particular with the whole is that of development (*Entwicklung*). Ritter believes that rejecting an order and a connection between facts empties history of all meaning. A fundamental aspect of history therefore is the assumption of the unity of all its moments, a unity which cannot however be understood as static and always identical, or as a circular movement which always returns to its point of departure, but rather it is continual progress (*ein beständige Fortschreiten*). In effect, if we admit the existence of a rational principle that bestows order on things, we must admit that there is an aim, and history is understood as "progress towards that aim". The progress is constant but not mechanical; the rational principle that operates in history is a vital principle and, as such, it encounters ups and downs, growth and decline, and periods of greater or lesser awareness, which correspond to the rhythm of sleep and

wakefulness. To this end, we can go back to the concept of “construction”. Indeed, we have to know the idea of humanity in general (and, in our case, that of philosophy) and its destiny (*Bestimmung*), to be able to deduce the phases of its historical coming about. In order to undertake serious historical research, we need to know the ultimate aim, the state of realization of the idea of humanity, even if this knowledge will never be perfectly adequate, as, Ritter points out, knowledge follows existence and moreover only a part of the tendencies towards reality come to the consciousness at a time. But with all these limitations, Ritter sees the point of convergence of all the tendencies that have developed in the past in the present, in the philosophy of his time: “We will thus evaluate the destiny of reason in general, and the destiny of philosophizing reason in particular, only on the basis of the present point of view of our science, and, in conformity with this, we will be able to predetermine how reason must have raised itself up to this point in its perfecting, what obstacles it had to overcome for this reason, and what forms of development it passed through” (I, p. 27).

In the dynamic of the relationship between the individual (the object of history) and the universal (the object of philosophy), the value of philosophy seems again to prevail. The fact that the roles are reversed is linked to Ritter’s method of analysis, which follows the rhythm of Schleiermacher’s dialectic. This dialectic contemplates a circular movement between opposites, which deepens and enriches each pole in its relationship with the other, without resolving them into a complete unity. The historical method also works in dialectic terms. It responds to two different and opposing needs: one is descriptive (recounting facts as they happened in the course of time), and the other is evaluative (judging the steps reached in the path towards the realization of philosophy, starting from the current point of view). In the reciprocal penetration of these two procedures, which themselves remain separate, “true historical knowledge” takes place, as Ritter states in setting out his historiographical programme: “We shall therefore make an effort to understand everything in the historical past that expresses philosophical development in such a way that it reveals to us its meaning for current philosophy and it demonstrates how it still remains in our knowledge, albeit in other forms, or even how it has become the means for finding the present philosophical vision” (I, pp. 30–31). This commitment, which we can define as philosophical, must not however pre-condition our work on historiography, which is essentially descriptive and objective. Ritter promises he will remain faithful to the facts and rigorously transmit them; he declares, in fact, that since “the transmission of facts is the principal task of history”, diligence and fidelity (*der Fleiß und die Treue*) are to be considered among the historian’s essential qualities”.

The historian of philosophy must sometimes turn himself into a philosopher; but he must not renounce the specific nature of his method, which is not deduction, but induction, namely, “the discovery of the general from the particular”. It is against the nature of historical knowledge, states Ritter at the end of the ‘Einleitung’, to presuppose what has to be found in advance: the historian’s task in the first place is to “transmit individual facts” then to “connect them in an uninterrupted series”. But while the first aspect must be undertaken with the greatest precision and completeness, the second cannot be resolved so easily. In history there must be room for the

free, random, contingent event which cannot be connected to the chain of development because it is impossible for the historian to know this development in its entirety. Historiography thus becomes not only a complex but an infinite task, just as the job of understanding human facts is infinite, according to Schleiermacher's model of hermeneutics.

In Ritter's last published work, an open letter *An Leopold von Ranke über deutsche Geschichtsschreibung*, he deals with the dynamics of the link between historiography and philosophy, a discussion which marked the definitive end to his friendship with Ranke, which had already cooled on account (in Ranke's view) of Ritter's increasing closeness to the Hegelians (cf. Simon, *Ranke und Hegel*, pp. 104–106). After speaking of his "intimate friendship" with Ranke ever since their time in Berlin (when both moved in the circle around Schleiermacher), Ritter casts judgement on recent German nineteenth-century historiography, which differs in several respects from that of Ranke (cf. above, p. 32–35), even though he recognises later that the difference is more one of terminology than of substance (cf. *An Leopold Ranke*, p. 50). In particular, Ritter disagrees with Ranke's insistence on the opposition between history and philosophy, and the importance and independence which he gave to history, even though this position seemed to receive the support of the entire cultural tendency of the period, which was clearly oriented towards studies of a historical and scientific nature.

Right from the beginning, historiography has shown its vocation to transform itself (as it had done in Herodotus) into a history of mankind in all its manifestations, or a history of culture, civilization, or humanity (*Sittengeschichte*, *Culturgeschichte*, *Geschichte der Menschheit*). But it is only with recent German historiography that this perspective was definitively and explicitly accepted, thanks to the philosophical revolution brought about by Kant and Fichte (with which he associates the names of Lessing and Herder), which recognised the will and the freedom of man and placed them in opposition to nature and its laws. Ritter does not fail to point out the ways in which the Kantian (and Idealistic) idea of the development of free will according to a law has been misapplied. The various philosophies of history based on this idea mostly "sank". The concrete facts cannot be constructed *a priori* and therefore we must reject the method of the construction of history from above with general philosophical principles (cf. *An Leopold Ranke*, pp. 46–47).

Yet since the facts in themselves are devoid of sense, we must recognise that the "method of philosophical construction" has a certain role, as long as it is not understood as an *a priori*, abstract procedure, but is based on the facts themselves. In this case we should speak properly not of the construction, but rather of the reconstruction (*Reconstruction*) of history by means of the re-composition of its parts into a unity. Every historical period has had its dominant sciences, with theology in the Middle Ages, philology in the Renaissance, and finally the science of physics and mathematics in the modern age. Kant marked the beginning of the philosophical period which culminated in the "absolute philosophy" of Hegel. History and natural science then formed a coalition against the constructivist and a prioristic claims of absolute philosophy. Yet this alliance, even though it had a common basis in its reference to experience, could not last long, as the objects and the aims of the two

disciplines diverged or were indeed opposite, just as reason and nature are opposite. To resolve this opposition, it is necessary to turn to philosophy, which establishes the limits (*die Grenzen*) between nature and spirit, natural science and historical science, and the transition from one to the other. In the absence of these limits, historiography starts to derive its laws from the science of nature and to subordinate itself to it, as happened in recent German historiography and still more in the historiography of other countries (here Ritter cites Compté and Buckle as an example). Ritter, therefore, defends the use of philosophy in historiography, albeit with the limits mentioned above, but he refuses to countenance the philosophy of history (and in this he is in agreement with Ranke): “This is what I would call the philosophical understanding of history and you have called the universal understanding of history. People have also spoken of the philosophy of history, but it was a mistake to believe it was possible to produce a philosophical construction of history in this way. History must only be given the help that it needs for its own reconstruction. Here we must learn to grasp ‘the ethical point of view’ (*den sittlichen Gesichtspunkt*), proceeding from which we must consider all the parts of history in order to be able to set it out as belonging to a whole, to ethical or cultural history, or to the history of humanity.” (p. 50).

2.2.4 *Geschichte der Philosophie*

2.2.4.1 The first four volumes (comprising 13 books in all) are devoted to ancient philosophy: *Geschichte der Philosophie alter Zeit*. The first volume deals only with Oriental and pre-Socratic philosophy. After a ‘Vorrede’ and an ‘Inhalt’ of 42 pages (numbered separately), the entire work is introduced in the first book: *Einleitung. Uebersicht und Eintheilung* (I, pp. 1–42); another book then describes the “prehistory” of ancient philosophy, represented by Oriental thought and primitive Greek philosophy: *Der alten Philosophie Vorgeschichtliches und Eintheilung* (I, pp. 43–186). The first period of ancient thought, that is to say, pre-Socratic philosophy, is divided in turn into four ‘Abtheilungen’: the Ionics (I, pp. 187–336), the Pythagoreans (I, pp. 337–436), the Eleatics (I, pp. 437–539), and the Sophists (I, pp. 541–614).

The second volume describes the period of the Socratic schools in two books, the first on Socrates and the minor Socratic schools (Ritter speaks of “imperfect Socratics”, II, pp. 1–147), and the second on Plato (II, 149–494). The third volume continues with the other schools of classical philosophy (still defined as Socratic): the Aristotelian (III, pp. 76–415), the Sceptic and the Epicurean (III, pp. 416–495), and the Stoic (III, pp. 497–719). The fourth volume finally (we used the 2nd ed. of 1839) deals with the third period of ancient philosophy, treated as its decline, and contains two books: the first describes the spread of Greek thought in the Orient and among the Romans (IV, pp. 1–568), and the second Neoplatonic philosophy (IV, pp. 569–754). At the end there are interesting *Schlussbetrachtungen* on the entire course of ancient philosophy (IV, pp. 728–754).

The second part of the history of philosophy, defined by Ritter as “Christian philosophy”, takes up eight volumes: four on Patristic and scholastic thought, and

four on modern thought. The first volume contains four books: one is of an introductory nature on the concept and the subdivisions of Christian philosophy (V, pp. 1–108), and the others revolve around the transition from ancient to Christian philosophy, with particular reference to the Gnostics (V, pp. 109–285), the Apologists (V, pp. 287–417), and the Catechetical school of Alexandria up to Origen (V, pp. 419–564). The second volume contains three books, which deal with the golden period of Patristic thought and its period of crisis: the age of Trinitarian disputes (VI, pp. 1–150), Augustine (VI, pp. 151–443), and the period of decline (VI, pp. 445–635).

Two volumes deal with Scholastic thought. They begin with an introductory book on the concept and the periodization of Scholasticism (VII, pp. 1–168); one book is then devoted to the transition from ancient philosophy via the new Germanic peoples (VII, pp. 169–296), and the other deals with the first fragmentary systems up until the twelfth century (VII, pp. 297–633). The volume concludes with a fourth book, which describes Arabic philosophy, and covers the first part of the following volume (VII, pp. 633–760; VIII, 1–178). Much space is then devoted to the culmination of Scholasticism in the thirteenth century (VIII, pp. 179–544) and finally to the crisis of the theological systems and the end of Scholasticism (VIII, pp. 545–723).

The last four volumes have a second frontispiece: *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*. Here too the first book is an introduction (IX, pp. 1–138), then, completing volume IX and filling the first part of volume X are two books which deal with the first attempts at reforming the sciences in the sixteenth century (IX, pp. 139–434) and the effects of the Renaissance and the Reformation on philosophy (IX, pp. 435–748; X, pp. 1–306). The tenth volume continues with the reform of philosophy by Bacon and his immediate successors (Grotius, Hobbes, and Gassendi) (X, pp. 307–571). The eleventh volume dives straight into modern philosophy, with two books on the history of Cartesianism (XI, pp. 1–425) and seventeenth-century English philosophy (XI, pp. 427–588). The final volume tackles the most recent phase in the history of philosophy, with an important first book on the transformation of theosophy into metaphysics (by van Helmont and Leibniz) (XII, pp. 1–210); one book is on English philosophy (XII, pp. 211–366), another on French philosophy (XII, pp. 367–512), and finally the last book reviews the exponents of the European Enlightenment (Wolff, Baumgarten, Burke, Hemsterhuis, Montesquieu, and Rousseau) (XII, pp. 513–652).

This broad, precise division reflects the need for general but succinct descriptions which reveal the author's own opinion. Apart from the numerous *Einleitungen* to the various sections or historical periods, which in some cases fill an entire book, at the end of each book and each chapter there are *Schlüsse* or *Uebersichten* which are very interesting for the way in which they attempt to provide overall interpretations.

2.2.4.2 In a work like Ritter's, so vast and complete, the periodization is of great importance and it is effectively discussed both in the general *Einleitung* and in the individual sections. What is characteristic is the division of the history of philosophy into two periods, known respectively as ancient and Christian philosophy. This

division is due in the first place to a consideration of the philosophical present, whose origin is sought, and, in the second place, to the hypothesis that the advent of Christianity produced a radical change in the spiritual (and cultural) history of Europe, a hypothesis which the historical treatment is called on to validate. Ritter recognises two great “levers” at the basis of our Western civilization: Christianity and Greek and Roman culture. The East influenced it only indirectly, by way of the Greeks; and indeed, Oriental philosophy (Indian thought in particular) is only dealt with in passing, in relation to Greek thought. Current philosophy is therefore the result of two philosophical traditions, which can be separated, not mechanically, but rather like the chemical components of a substance. In fact, it is not possible to draw a distinct line between the first and the second period in the history of philosophy, as for several centuries (at the beginning of the common era) they overlap. If we imagine the philosophy of our time as a chemical compound, Ritter isolates the elements of it and deals with them independently, as if they had a life of their own.

Soon, however, the chemical model is replaced by a biological one. Indeed, Ancient philosophy is divided into three “ages”: adolescence is represented by the pre-Socratics, maturity by the Socratic schools, and old age by philosophy in the Roman period and Neoplatonism. This type of periodization is justified (as well as by a comparison with the periods of Greek literature and the often mentioned analogy with the life of man) by recourse to the intrinsic need for philosophical development: “A more precise determination of the three degrees of perfection of Greek philosophy can certainly be obtained from this philosophy itself. It is entirely natural that, as long as philosophy developed in a local, restricted ambit, it was impossible for the entire Greek spirit to express itself in it. In such circumstances, the philosophical tendency has to come from a particular scientific interest and end in the satisfaction of this interest. This is precisely the characteristic of the first period of Greek philosophy. In the second period, the opposite had to happen, since philosophical reflection was not only stimulated by one side of the scientific spirit which was then active among the Greeks, but this philosophy was produced, so to speak, by the spiritual totality of the Greek people. Therefore, we must expect to find the complete and detailed representation of what was in general philosophy for the Greeks in the second period of Greek philosophy. On the other hand, we can expect that in the third of our periods, with the character and the strength of the Greek spirit, the comprehension of the systematic order of the essence of Greek philosophy came to be lost, even though the tradition of it has been preserved” (I, p. 178). The transition between the three epochs came about gradually. With his dialectic, Plato certainly marked the beginning of the new period, but there was not an equally radical change in the “form” of philosophy between the second and the third period, but rather the introduction of new contents in connection with the diverse traditions of the Orient and Rome. At the time of Cicero this process is clearly outlined.

The divisions within the periods respond to the same criteria, in part of a speculative nature, and in part historical and political. For Ritter, four schools flowered in the pre-Socratic period: the Ionian, the Pythagorean, the Eleatic, and the Sophist. The first two correspond to the principal ethnic groups of Greece, the Ionians and

the Dorians, the former democratic, and the latter aristocratic; the former more interested in the physical and naturalistic elements and the latter in the ethical and pedagogical. The Eleatics were a synthesis of the two schools, connected to the Ionians through ethnic tradition, and to the Pythagoreans because of their geographical proximity and their culture. The three-fold division is also connected to the natural evolution of philosophical research, which is initially unorganized and one-sided, and then tends towards unity. In this way each school elaborated a part of philosophy: the Ionians the physical element, the Pythagoreans the ethical, the Eleatics the logical and dialectical (the unity of the first two). The Sophists complete the circle of pre-Socratic thought, by questioning the very possibility of philosophy, treated exclusively from the point of view of the subject, without any relation to the object.

Christian and modern philosophy is presented as something independent, not as a development of Ancient philosophy. It is also divided into three ages, although Ritter believes that we have to proceed with greater caution because philosophy in this part of its history has not yet completed its cycle of development. He appeals therefore to a certain capacity for prophecy, which allows him in some way to foretell the outcome of philosophical research in the present and immediate future. A first model of periodization is provided by political history. Our age has seen three types of political organization: the Roman Empire, the Germanic nations and the Holy Roman Empire, and finally the nation states. There are also three ages in Christian philosophy: the patristic, the scholastic, and modern philosophy in a strict sense. To these Ritter adds a fourth age using his prophetic intuition, which goes from Kant and is particularly successful in Germany. Ritter shows some uncertainty over the first two ages, which he sometimes considers together and at other times apart. This depends on the fact that, as far as their content is concerned, the Christian thought of the early centuries did not distinguish itself from that of the Middle Ages; they were only separated by their external form, the predominantly polemical nature of the former and the systematic tendency of the latter. But, for reasons of a historical nature set out above, in the end Ritter prefers to separate patristic from scholastic philosophy.

Modern philosophy is characterized by its opposition to patristic and scholastic thought, for having abandoned a unilateral approach to theology and having discovered the temporal dimension. A movement was thus formed which was contrary to that which preceded it, but just as "natural" to philosophical research, which had to "embrace both the temporal and the divine, and, by means of its research into the finite, initiate us into an understanding of the infinite" (V, p. 63). This direction, however, soon became exclusive, generating an almost divine respect for antiquity and nature, and thus inclining towards atheism. A philosophy of this type did not necessarily lead to the negation of Christian philosophy, however, and acted, rather, as a catalyst for its completion.

With Kant we have a new and more appropriate philosophical perspective, which originated by uniting the uniquely theological tendency of the Fathers and the Scholastics with the uniquely worldly tendency of the modern philosophers. This synthesis was made possible by the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which confuted all

dogmatic philosophy that claimed to extend the principles that hold for experience to philosophical objects. With his distinction between phenomenon and noumenon, concepts and ideas, Kant opened up the realm of the super-sensible to philosophy, ensuring, however, that the theological perspective had a necessary connection with the finite, the empirical world. Ritter thus justifies the beginning of the last period in the history of philosophy (which he merely mentions here, as it is not yet the subject of historical research): “We must therefore consider it an immortal merit of Kant to have lifted his gaze above experience to the transcendental and to have taught us to distinguish between the principles of experience and transcendental ideas. In this way, he has given research a theological direction (*eine theologische Richtung*) again and German philosophy, which followed him in this, can thus be considered to be the philosophy that has again inverted the exclusively worldly tendency to a way of thinking that is more favourable to theology” (V, p. 74).

2.2.4.3 Moving on now to the most significant historiographical theses, the first thing to note is Ritter’s defence of the original nature of Greek philosophy with arguments that are similar to those used by Schleiermacher: “When we turn our gaze to the very beginnings of philosophy with the Greeks, we find them to be so simple and independent of all traditions that they resemble first attempts. The process of perfecting happened in such a gradual way that we can observe it at every step; nothing happened suddenly that can be attributed to some foreign teaching. When something handed down is mixed into the formation of a philosophy, we can recognise it by the fact that it introduces strange ideas and formulas that present themselves without sufficient reason and are not fully understood, and hence give rise to forced and obscure deductions and many quibbling attempts at reasoning. There is no trace of this in the most ancient Greek philosophy. In its systems everything connects to a very simple way of representation, as is natural at the moment of the first awakening of the philosophical consciousness, and without any great help either in explaining or demonstrating or confuting, they contented themselves with an ambit of thought that every Greek person in that period could easily understand” (I, pp. 173–174).

In the Ionian school, Ritter can already discern two tendencies in its founders, Thales and Anaximander, which he defines respectively as dynamic physics and mechanical physics: dynamic physics makes natural phenomena derive from the development of a living force immanent in reality, while mechanical physics makes them derive from external changes of a quantitative nature. The most complete development of dynamic physics came about with Diogenes of Apollonia, and marked the end of the process of the dematerialization of the principle of the real, as he “confuses and identifies the physical force of the air, which is the principle of movement, with reason, the principle of ends and of knowledge. Thus, with the broadening of the horizon of thought the purity of physics was lost” (I, p. 234). “Mechanical” physics found its most coherent systematization with Anaxagoras (and not with the Atomists, who for Ritter led rather to the negation of philosophy itself). The fundamental idea is that sensible qualities and the phenomena of nature do not derive from a qualitative change in the original being, but from the joining or

the separation of immutable elements caused by external movement. From this principle, Anaxagoras derived two important new ideas for the development of philosophy: the identification of the moving force as intelligence or *nous*, spirit (*Geist*), and above all the distinction between spirit and matter, the bodily and the spiritual. The importance of Anaxagoras also lies in his perfecting of the method of research, "because of his striving towards logical consistency (*Folgerechtigkeit*) in scientific procedure" (I, p. 328).

The other pre-Socratic school, that of the Pythagoreans, was traditionally connected to Oriental influences, which Ritter considers to be extrinsic and of little importance, like the symbolic expression taken from the Egyptians. Pythagoras is therefore presented as "the principal teacher of himself and the result of the great scientific movement of his age". Based on Aristotle's interpretation (*Metaph.* I, 5), the two essential sides of Pythagoras's teaching are given as the moral dimension that runs through it, and that which is derived in turn from having understood the first principle in terms of algebra, hence as order and harmony. This is the great novelty that drove philosophical reflection far from the empirical and the sensible in the search for general ideas and principles. This was also the direction followed by the Eleatics. While up to that point philosophers had sought the foundation of the sensible in the super-sensible, Parmenides and his followers disregarded the sensible, maintaining that all truth had to be investigated in the sphere of reason. This, for Ritter, constituted effective progress, with the limit however of not having related the two sides of philosophy with each other, namely the absolute and the relative, but only of having juxtaposed them: "In whatever way you consider the results of Eleatic philosophy, you cannot deny that this first attempt to rectify the form of sensible representation and bring it back to its true value by means of the pure concepts of reason is extremely worthy of note. In this way, for the first time, the purely speculative element was distinguished in our thought from all empirical elements and so the consciousness was prepared for the concept of philosophy" (I, p. 538).

Ritter credits the Sophists with greater significance than they were traditionally given, and includes Democritus and ancient atomism with them. The characteristic element of the Sophists lies not in a mercenary sense of knowledge, but rather in scepticism, that is, in the refusal to recognise the possibility of science. This "anti-philosophical" element is also attributed to the atomism of Democritus: "If we consider the doctrine of Democritus as a whole, we cannot deny the anti-philosophical nature of his efforts. Indeed, he not only denies the unity of the world, but also the unity of the soul and the consciousness. It is no longer possible, therefore, to think of the unity of science, and everything is resolved in an infinite multitude of atoms and in the immensity of vacuum" (I, p. 581). Despite this negative prejudice, Ritter recognises the contribution of the Sophists to the progress of philosophy for having brought research back to man and the value of science, thus preparing the way, in a negative sense, for the transition to Socratic philosophy: "This prepared for a more mature philosophy, which set itself the task of examining every thought in relation to the idea of science, from the point of view of both form and content" (I, p. 614).

Notwithstanding these observations, which seem to point to a continuity, Ritter highlights the transition to the new period, Socratic philosophy. This transition is

marked by external circumstances, such as the cultural flowering of Athens at a time in which its political decline began, and by the new character of philosophical research which turned deliberately to the foundation of a universal science which could include the diverse disciplines in a unity. In this process, the turning point was represented by Socrates. The characteristic element of Socratic thought was not, in fact, as we had often been led to believe on the basis of a well-known passage from Cicero, the rejection of physical and astronomical research and investigation instead into man; the central point was the idea of science, which is at the origin of the motto "know thyself". This was the germ that was to be cultivated by subsequent philosophers, Aristotle in particular.

Almost all of the second volume is devoted to Plato, the man and his thought (II, pp. 149–494). The first problem regards the authenticity and the order of the dialogues and is resolved according to Schleiermacher's indications. The dialogues are divided into three classes: 1) the youthful or Socratic dialogues, including the *Phaedrus*, the *Protagoras*, and other minor dialogues; 2) the dialectic or central dialogues, which give us the particular Platonic meaning of dialectic (the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist*, and the *Statesman*); 3) the doctrinal dialogues which contain doctrines that have already been defined regarding physics and ethics (the *Republic*, the *Timaeus*, and the *Laws*). Then there are the dialogues of transition: the *Gorgias* marks the transition to the second period, the *Phaedo* and the *Philebus* introduce the third. Compared to Schleiermacher's division (see above, p. 55), there is an uncertainty about where to place the *Parmenides*, which is no longer considered to be one of the youthful dialogues but is among the dialectic dialogues, albeit in a secondary position with respect to the others. Schleiermacher is again the source of the systematic and non-evolutionary interpretation of Plato's thought, understood as a homogeneous and unitary product since it depends on a central point which is present right from the start and reveals itself in various ways: "Indeed, as far as the result of this research on the philosophy of Plato is concerned, we cannot think that, by this means [that is, the order of the dialogues], we can decide what Plato's true and final opinion on these controversial points was. We do not have to fear that there is any essential contradiction in a man like Plato, in whose eyes all teaching flowed from a central point of scientific vision to which all the rest flowed back again. He may happen to express himself differently on this or that subject; but then either it is only an occasional opinion or the difference will not be in the thought but in the way of understanding it or explaining it" (II, pp. 178–179).

The Platonic concept of philosophy is linked to that of science. The *Theaetetus* provides a definition of science, but, as we know, it ends in a problematic way. In effect, observes Ritter, it is impossible to define science in connection with extraneous principles or other fields; it can only be defined by itself. The common regulator which gives value to every other science is dialectic; it is, as we can read in the *Philebus*, "the science of all the other sciences". Hence all the sciences are dominated by a single science, dialectic, which teaches not only what is legitimately part of each, but also contains "knowledge of the other sciences" (II, p. 184). To limit this meaning of Plato's dialectic, expressed in idealistic terms, a distinction (taken from the *Symposium*) is introduced "between the ideal of science and human

science”, a distinction which is based on the awareness that Plato had of the imperfection of human life. Dialectic is therefore the perfect science, but only a possible one; it is not effectively possessed by man, but is an ideal goal and a criterion of judgement in the particular sciences: “Plato recognised that in the imperfection of human life it is necessary to distinguish between acting and knowing, between that which has developed in us to become pure knowledge with the aid of the idea of perfect science, and that which is produced by uncertain opinion or by the individual sciences, which have not yet found their final foundation or their place in general science. But he was far from taking these distinctions as definitive; they are only valid in the flow of human life, and he recognised a term which is free from all of these distinctions and leads research to final peace, and to which all human activity, both practical and intellectual, must refer. For him, this term is dialectic, the perfect science, which knows the determination of every concept and every species. Even the mathematical sciences, which Plato valued more, only had some value because they lead to it; if the sciences do not lead to it, not recognising their own unity and their reciprocal ties, they are useless” (II, pp. 209–210).

Dialectic is not only the first part of Plato’s philosophy, but is also the basis of the other parts (ethics and physics): it is not an abstract science (or formal logic) as it tended to become from Aristotle onwards, but rather perfect science, in which the content is never separated from the form. Ritter insists on this unity, and sees it as the hallmark of Platonism: “Since Plato’s dialectic is entirely determined on the basis of the concept of science, indicating on one hand the forms of thought in which a thought can be contained, and, on the other, defining the modes of being that are expressed in these forms, dialectic is for him both a doctrine of thought and a doctrine of being (*zugleich Lehre vom Denken und Lehre vom Sein*). The separation of these two doctrines is [...] absolutely contrary to Plato’s intentions” (II, p. 226). The content of dialectic is represented in the first place by the doctrine of ideas and by the consequent doctrines concerning God and matter. Most of the uncertainties which have long obscured the true meaning of Plato’s ideas come from having taken them as a form of thought separate from being. In the first place the ideas mean that truth can only have as its object the immutable essence of things; furthermore, that this essence is not so identical to itself as not to admit any diversity, but it is such as to embrace a multitude of particular ideas; and in the third place – and this is the decisive element – they mean that the particular only exists by virtue of the general. The ideas do not subsist separately in themselves therefore, but are organized in a system, the greatest of which is the unity of the inferior ones, just as the lowest one constitutes the unity of the sensible multiplicity. Ritter places this new conception of the general, which contains the particular and the individual, at the basis of the Platonic system.

Ritter also sheds light on the shortcoming of Plato’s dialectic: Plato rightly understood it to be the unity of two opposite movements from the general to the particular and vice versa, but he was not able to explain the attainment of unity, as he placed too much stress on the primacy and the dignity of the general. God’s relationship with the world is fully justified from the point of view of God, conceived of as a model (*als das Muster*) to which the universe aspires; it is less so from the point

of view of the world, conceived with the characteristics of multiplicity, and therefore in irreconcilable opposition to the idea. Plato has a clear concept of the divinity as “the true good and the true beauty” while his concept of matter as something indeterminate and undefinable is contradictory: “What is certain in the position of this philosopher is, on one hand, the tendency to make every true being derive from immutable ideas, so the sensible appears to him more like an unsubstantial shadow than a reality, while, on the other hand, he does not forget that the only point of view from which philosophy is possible, lies in the sensible itself, and so again the reality of the sensible appears to him as a necessary supposition of his system. In his inclination to these two points of view we have to find the measured sense of the Platonic spirit. Neither Plato, nor his time were allowed to truly join these two points of view together. He saw the enigma (*das Räthsel*), not the solution. We should not wonder, therefore, if he had to turn to a whole series of indeterminate representations, none of which could finally satisfy him” (II, pp. 340–341).

The same unresolved dualism also characterises the other two parts of Plato’s philosophy, physics and ethics. Physics studies becoming in its relation to true being; but the bodily exists in so far as it is unified by supreme reason, and the contingent can never be identical to true being. In the same way, virtue is relative good and it expresses the tendency of man towards the good, but it is not the good in itself. Despite these reservations, which concern an inability to understand “the reality of life” (*die Wirklichkeit des Lebens*), Ritter places Plato’s thought at the pinnacle of Greek philosophy. It contains a grandiose vision of life and the world: God is the unmoving and unchanging good, the world is the good in becoming, and the human soul is that in which and through which the good becomes in the world. This was also the heart of Socrates’s teaching, and Plato had the merit of developing it through his dialectic, which gave all the parts of the system the living breath of unity (*den belebenden Athem eines Ganzen*).

The section on Aristotle is also like a work in its own right: it is lengthy, divided into parts, and well-documented. There is a continual comparison with Plato, from a description of his personality, his method, and his style. Aristotle is presented as “a pleasant and moderate researcher”, capable of investigating the truth in all its aspects, certainly not as brilliant as Plato, but solid, and more interested in the content than in the form of expression. He can be considered “the father of the history of philosophy”, even though this might seem to some to be a sign of decline, with greater attention paid to erudition and memory than to creation and art. On the problem of Aristotle’s works, Ritter goes back to Buhle’s distinction between acroamatic and esoteric writings, which corresponds to the two methods used in the school (*paideia* and *episteme*), and he observes that the style is bad, convoluted, and too concise. Furthermore, he recognises the authenticity of almost all of Aristotle’s works, in particular those dealing with physics, those which have come to be known as the *Organon* (except the second part of the *Categories*), and finally the books of the *Metaphysics*.

In Aristotle the direction of philosophical research is Platonic. Aristotle is also in search of a general idea that can serve as the basis for the particular sciences, and he finds it in the concept of “first philosophy”, which corresponds therefore to Plato’s

dialectic. "It is clear", observes Ritter, "that Aristotle's first philosophy and Plato's dialectic differ in name only. Just as Plato proclaimed the need to give science a basis that was certain and not hypothetical, so Aristotle felt the need to give a basis to the principles supposed by the particular sciences. Plato sought a non-hypothetical, or first and true principle in the super-sensible idea of God and he indicated being *par excellence*, or rather true being, as the object of dialectic. Aristotle was also convinced that the object of first philosophy was being as distinct from matter. Let us also add that for Aristotle, just as for Plato, the science *par excellence*, which dominates all the others, is the science of the good" (III, p. 64). Furthermore, logic is not something separate from metaphysics in Aristotle either. The process of knowledge comes to coincide with the process of reality; what changes is the relationship between the two poles of the process. Both philosophers place knowledge of the super-sensible in the autonomous activity of the reason, but by recognising the link between sensation and super-sensible knowledge, Aristotle rejects the search for ideas alone, "convinced as he was that the fullness of science can only result from the completeness of experience" (III, p. 113). Aristotle wants to integrate the two processes, induction and deduction, while Plato gave prevalence to deduction; nevertheless, in Ritter's opinion, both err in giving too much importance to either the sensible or the intelligible.

The transition from logic to metaphysics is mediated by the concept of God as the unmoved mover. This is the Aristotelian principle that has contributed the most to the progress of philosophical knowledge: "In any case, we must recognise the profundity of Aristotle's vision, which started from the idea that human science must form itself from phenomena and the experience which derives from them, and he considered the supreme principle of all things to be energy, activity, and life, but the life of an unchanging form, a life that is at the same time the entire essence. God, the object of science, appeared to him not as dead perfection or as a concept separate from the life of the sensible phenomenon, but as a living and yet complete being. [...] It can be said of Aristotle that he was the first in the Socratic school to have completely reconciled the concept of essence and the concept of life, thus decisively extending the domain of science. The concept of energy or *entelechia* designates this reconciliation and it is therefore peculiar to Aristotle, just as the concept of the idea is proper to Plato" (III, pp. 204–205).

The other two parts of Aristotle's philosophy are of less importance. Physics is not a science in a rigorous sense, but the "domain of uncertain opinion" in so far as its object is change and movement. The same can be said of ethics, which refers to the needs and aims of man understood as a part of nature. Aristotle thus breaks away from Socrates, who had sought the principle of morality exclusively in dialectic, that is, in science and in reason; indeed he "does not consider reason to be the first principle of virtue, but rather the natural impulse and the passional states of the soul" (III, p. 297).

Ritter claims that his final judgement is balanced. On one hand, Aristotle's philosophy represents progress compared to that of Plato because it attempted to submit the entire domain of experience (*das ganze Gebiet der Erfahrung*) to the jurisdiction of reason; on the other, however, it constitutes a step backwards because,

as it does not manage to entirely subordinate the empirical to the rational, it founded the empirical in an independent way and gave the rational a limited function. "Why", asks Ritter finally, "does the world need an external motor, if movement propagates eternally from one real being to another uninterruptedly? Why do we need divine reason to explain that which is real in the world, since the world comes about by virtue of itself, tending to the good? We cannot easily answer these questions from an Aristotelian point of view" (III, p. 394).

In the post-Aristotelian period, the only philosophical movement of any worth was that of the Stoics, while Scepticism and Epicureanism are considered to be secondary, isolated phenomena, and therefore fall outside the line of scientific development. The Stoics are closely connected to the classical philosophical tradition, to Socrates and Aristotle in particular. They refer to Socrates for their tendency to philosophize in a simple, natural way, and hold the aim of philosophy as the practice of virtue, understood in its essence as coinciding with science. This plan (which, as we shall see, is Socratic) was carried out, however, in Aristotelian terms. This is already clear in their logic, which privileges sensation as the means for attaining science. "From this", observes Ritter, "there derives a contradiction in the system of the Stoics, similar to that which we found in Aristotle. General ideas, by means of which we attempt to grasp and scientifically understand things, seemed to them to be vain images of our representative faculty. They wanted to consider as essential only that which is individual, but in the end, they found themselves forced to attribute the highest logical value to the general, indeed such value that it seemed to compromise the truth of every individual being" (III, p. 560).

The Stoics' physics and ethics merely have an indirect relationship with logic and they share some points of view with the Peripatetic school (Strato). Their material consideration of the universe led to the rejection of the Platonic "ideal" and the "pure form" of early Aristotelianism. The very concept of virtue has a materialistic basis, since it fundamentally identifies itself with instinct, with the natural movement of the soul towards something. Finally, the concept of nature, which is the basis of both physics and ethics, is ambiguous as it can mean both universal nature (in Cleanthes), and the individual nature of man (in Chrysippus). Stoic philosophy shows the opposing tendencies of Socratic philosophy most clearly. Having decided that the object of science is the "form of the concept", the unchanging essence, the philosophers of the classical age were forced to separate becoming from this, both in natural things and in man, and to consider it as something which cannot be reduced to reason. Philosophical reflection consists in oscillation between the two poles, and it reveals itself to be incapable of reconciling them. Ritter reaches this conclusion in the lengthy *Uebersicht*, which ends the account of the thinkers who lived in the classical age. "Their strength lies in the precise and rigorous form of the science in which they move. They all had in common the search for a science that really attains its object. The Stoics themselves were led by this to the opinion that in the world of things a general, rational law expresses itself. But everyone attempted to find science in the form of the concept: for them it represented the essence of things (*das Wesen der Dinge*). This form led them to recognise the general and the particular, unity and multiplicity in their necessary connection; but, by striving to

realize science in philosophy, they were also forced to admit the value of becoming (*das Werden*) in man and in nature, as well as lasting and persistent essence, which expresses itself in the concept. Thus, the organic unity of their doctrine was formed in the three parts of philosophy: logic, physics, and ethics. Now, in this general, solid outline of their doctrine we can see certain other mobile elements, which led to a more varied treatment of the objects of science. These oscillations (*Schwankungen*) concern the relationship between the general and the particular, unity and multiplicity, and the persistent essence and changing life. It is very instructive to observe how the oscillating movement of their doctrines forms naturally in the opposing tendencies" (III, p. 715).

Ritter interprets the last phase of Greek philosophy as a form of decline. The weakened philosophical spirit was clearly influenced by external circumstances: it encountered Roman civilization on one hand and forms of Oriental philosophy on the other, as well as being affected by the spread of Christianity. The philosophers who best reflect these three factors are Cicero, Philo of Alexandria, and Plotinus respectively. Cicero cannot be credited with originality, but he did smooth over difficulties and soften the excessively abstract tones of Greek thought. This ensured that his writings were effective over the centuries, and indeed they educated entire generations, from the Fathers of the Church to the men of the Renaissance, up until our times, influencing what Ritter defines as the "general culture" of the European West. In the Latin world, Greek culture maintained its essential characteristics; it underwent a profound change, however, in its encounter with Oriental thought. The place where this happened was Alexandria, and Philo was the conduit between the two cultures. The historical importance of Philo is stressed, both for his renewal of the hermeneutical canons of the Bible (with prevalence granted to the allegorical method) and for his formulation of particular doctrines, regarding matter and the relationship between man and God, which were to form the basis of Patristic speculation. Philo typically interpreted Greek thought on the basis of Oriental doctrines (such as that on grace) and these doctrines, states Ritter, "recommend him to our attention" (IV, p. 518).

Ritter's interpretation of Neoplatonism is very different from that of Hegel, and it is essentially negative. Plotinus, indeed, represents the final moment of ancient philosophy. He took heterogeneous scientific elements from the philosophers of the classical age, but did not manage to unify them properly. His limit was to look to the past, and he was incapable of responding to the crisis of ancient thought by opening up to new perspectives or by discovering new principles (as happened in the Christian camp). Plotinus did not reveal "an inventive spirit", even though a superior point of view, able to overcome the contradictions of the previous philosophies, often seems to transpire from his writings. He attempted to express this principle to which everything has to refer without ever actually working it out, since his work is like that of the Daughters of Danaus and he is repetitive and inconclusive, like the speech of an old man: "However splendid some of his individual, true, and robust thoughts might appear to us, and however much they may please us, only blinded eyes can make us ignore the signs of old age that Greek philosophy shows in these works. The total lack of form in his research, the lack of interest in individual pieces

of scientific knowledge, the lack of invention of new concepts, the inability to dominate with robust thought the diverging tendencies that had unmistakably shown themselves, all this clearly shows that we must view Plotinus as an excellent man for his time and his people, but that it was a time that was aging and a people heading unavoidably towards disintegration". (IV, pp. 665–666).

Ritter is particularly interested in patristic and scholastic philosophy, and he provides a general interpretation of them in the lengthy introductory chapter: 'Ueber den Begriff der christlichen Philosophie' (V, pp. 3–47). He is concerned to confute a well-rooted prejudice against the progress made by philosophy in the centuries after the advent of Christianity. This was certainly "very slow progress", achieved, moreover, in the field of theology, which seems in itself to limit the freedom to philosophize. The prejudice arises from an error of perspective, which looks at the advance of philosophical research from the Greeks to the modern age in a unitary fashion; this perspective has to change, for there is no continuity between ancient philosophy and Christian and modern philosophy. The advent of Christianity created a point of rupture in human history and in the history of philosophy. The driving force of the new age was the message of hope which Christianity gave mankind, the "promise of eternal life", which gave a new meaning to things, to man and his relationship with God. In ancient philosophy, the theme of the imperfection of human life had dominated, in which the idea of redemption had no place; Christian hope therefore offered a new basis for philosophical research.

Ritter is decisively against the rationalistic prejudice that makes every effective historical movement derive from "pure thought". Knowledge and science are not the result of an original activity, but rather "a late result of life", typical of maturity and not of the youthful period of man and of the various peoples. Ritter's point of view, however, is more anti-idealistic than anti-rationalistic. The principal driving force of history is not science, but the will, a "rational will", however, able to determine thought and be determined by it. On this basis, he also confutes the fideistic idea that denies the possibility of rationally justifying and defending Christianity, which in this way would not be able to present itself as "the true faith" and distinguish itself from superstition without the contribution of reason and philosophical awareness. Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion here finds an application to historiography. Christianity "is not philosophy, but a renewal of life that does not come from a thought but rather from an impulse of feeling, from the hope that derives from it and from the faith that it has the strength to shape the future towards the good" (V, pp. 16–17). Philosophy conceptually clarifies this content, but it does not produce it, taking it as a presupposition of speculation. It is not a presupposition that can block research based on a dogmatic position, however, as previous historians, from Brucker to Hegel had feared. The essence of Christianity, in fact, is only the "hope" for the spiritual renewal of humanity, and it initially presented itself from the doctrinal point of view as very simple and at the same time potentially full of various meanings (*vieldeutig*). Such a foundation created the ideal condition to guarantee the freedom of thought and favour the passion for research, certainly a more favourable condition than that represented in other times by the authority of certain philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle. "And it was natural for this to happen",

comments Ritter, “because they produced systematic philosophical doctrines”, while the faith expressed in the Scriptures produced “only allusions and incitements to philosophical research” (V, p. 22).

In the patristic and scholastic age, a new form of reflection took the place of ancient philosophy. This new form, however, must not be understood in relation to ancient philosophy (destined to disappear of its own accord), but rather in an essential relationship with the spiritual revolution which came about with Christianity. Initially, at the time of the Fathers, this relationship was more exclusive and religion claimed all the space for itself; but subsequently, in the scholastic period, the role and the independence of philosophy grew. The new religion certainly led to a limiting of the field of philosophy, but this limitation revealed itself to be not only necessary but also beneficial: “We must recognise”, concludes Ritter, “that in reality the Christian faith did not put philosophy in chains and it did not reduce it to some shameful sort of slavery; but rather it guided and raised it, was a healthy support and counsellor, and philosophy learnt to orient itself under its teaching. We cannot claim that this relationship between faith and philosophy has always remained pure, that faith has not sometimes usurped power from philosophy, something that was immediately unfavourable and negative for both, as it is right to expect given the fragility of human things. But the wrong relationship between faith and the philosophical thought of the early Christian centuries cannot be used to characterise their relationship in a general and essential way. As often happens, people merely considered appearances, as if the educator had become a tyrant. We, on the other hand, are certain that, by freeing men from the prejudices and the desperation of the ancient religions, the Christian religion also gave philosophy a powerful impulse, penetrating it deeply and teaching it to use reflection to resolve the most important questions” (V, p. 35).

This introduction is followed by a new interpretation of patristic thought in the first two volumes of the *Geschichte der christlichen Philosophie*. The most important moments in this period come with the Gnostics, the Catechetical school of Alexandria, and Saint Augustine. The first two phases are still permeated by Graeco-pagan elements, which stimulated the Fathers to react against them. With Augustine, Christian philosophy became systematised and was destined to be handed down through the centuries. The opinion of Brucker, taken up by Tennemann and Hegel, was that Augustine was a great theologian but a second-rate philosopher; Ritter, on the other hand, considers him to be a great and original philosopher, following Schleiermacher (see above, pp. 70–71). Augustine’s field of investigation was limited to the knowledge of God and the soul, observes Ritter; and this limitation is the source of the clear psychological tendency of his thought, which had a fundamentally Christian inspiration and was to profoundly influence philosophical research up until the modern age. The point of departure is doubt, the uncertainty of sensible knowledge and the overcoming of scepticism by means of the ideas of the intellect. Augustine’s thought is similar to that of Plato: the sensible is based on the intelligible, real things can be explained on the basis of ideas. It was not therefore faith, but research of a rational nature, that kept Augustine off the rocks of scepticism. He went further than Plato, however, as we can see from his idea of the divinity, more

internal to man than man is himself. Not only, therefore, does Augustine not need intermediary beings, like the Platonists, to connect man to God, but he contests the pride of those philosophers who claim to know something on their own, independently of revelation. This going beyond Platonism is even clearer in the other essential theme, the relationship between reason and faith, which is initially thought of in Platonic terms, and is then enriched by two other typically Christian concepts, hope and love. Here faith comes before reason, because there can be no knowledge of the truth without a love of the truth.

In Augustine's system, traces of ancient thought can still be seen at work; the dialectic between Greek elements and Christian principles, albeit with the prevalence of the latter, expresses the character of Augustine's philosophy and it explains the presence in it of certain contradictions or *aporiae*, such as those relating to freedom and grace. The rift within Augustine's thought reflects the rift that existed within the Church at that time. The Church nevertheless attempted to dominate and entirely incorporate the ancient world within itself. "This struggle ended in the way in which it had to end, with the victory of the Church. Within the whole of Augustine's teaching, the Christian element is incontestably dominant and he even gave the prejudices of the ancients a form that was to be useful to the Church, naturally not to the pure Church, but to the Church as it was conceived by Augustine and his time" (V, p. 443).

At the end of his analysis, Ritter reduces the speculative legacy of the Fathers to two doctrines which were destined to profoundly influence modern thought: the concept of the individual as a person and the doctrine of creation. As for the first point, Ritter attributes the affirmation of the positive reality of the individual to the primacy of faith, since faith is linked "to the peculiar conscience of the individual, to his feeling and conviction, to the moral character of the person" (V, p. 619). From this derives a new sense of personal immortality, something which the ancients had maintained in an uncertain and contradictory fashion (connecting it to metempsychosis) and that now, joined to Christian hope, gives reason and the human person a new dignity. The second speculative contribution of Christianity is the doctrine of creation, which formed the basis for overcoming the pantheism typical of ancient philosophy, safeguarding the individual as well as the universal. All things in fact are imperfect compared to God, but they tend towards perfection and are destined for it. This eliminated the ambiguity with which the ancient philosophers had thought of the relationship between the world and its cause, oscillating between dualism and emanatism. From a philosophical point of view, the elaboration of this doctrine is still uncertain, as the controversies over Trinitarian dogma demonstrate. These controversies were strongly permeated with residues of ancient philosophy (and emanatism), but they indicated the way towards a correct solution of the relationship of the world with God, which Ritter describes by following Spinoza and Schleiermacher.

Besides its positive appraisal of patristic philosophy, Ritter's work is also characterized by its new and favourable interpretation of medieval philosophy (he prefers to use this term rather than "scholasticism", an "arbitrary, ambiguous, and hence confusing" term: VII, p. 111). In a lengthy introduction ('*Einleitung in die*

Geschichte der Philosophie im Mittelalter', VII, pp. 1–168), after an interesting discussion of the historical and cultural background which speaks clearly of the Church's role in the organization of the cultural life of the Middle Ages, Ritter outlines the concept and the internal development of medieval thought. Victor Cousin, who considered the debate over universals to be at the centre of medieval philosophy, neglected all thought before the twelfth century. A similar approach had been taken by Braniß, who insisted on the use of dialectic and made scholasticism begin with Anselm, ignoring previous figures such as John Scotus Eriugena. For Ritter on the other hand, the philosophy of the Middle Ages falls within the same chronological limits as medieval civilization. Its systematic and dogmatic nature is linked to the development of this civilization. Besides the system of ecclesiastical institutions, a solid system of doctrines had to arise as their foundation. Medieval philosophy did not set itself the task of finding new contents, but of gathering together the ecclesiastical tradition and expressing it in the most suitable formulae. This aspiration to "form" brought medieval thinkers progressively closer to Aristotle, who provided the answer to theology's need for a scientific form, while the content came from the Fathers of the Church and Augustine in particular. "Hence", observes Ritter, "the cult of the scientific form was dominant right from the beginning, since their work was prevalently tuned towards the formal" (VII, p. 120).

The novelty of scholasticism, therefore, was represented by the need for logical coherence (cf. an analogy with the interpretation of Tiedemann: *Models*, III, pp. 666–669). This did not simply translate into the application of an external order to a given content, but in the pursuit of an "internal" order, capable of producing and explaining the content itself. It was not therefore a form of research which served the authority of the Church, according to the interpretations then current, but rather rational reflection on the most general foundations of theology and, by extension, of all the other sciences. Much had been said about the servility of the Scholastics, not only with respect to the Church but also towards Aristotle and the Arabs. In reality, this is simply a fabrication. We must observe in the first place that, if philosophy requires freedom of spirit, it does not always mean independence from every form of prejudice, otherwise we would be forced to deny the very existence of philosophy, "since we never find, in any historical age, a man free of prejudice" (VII, p. 124). We should, if anything, verify the quality of these prejudices and, to tell the truth, in the Middle Ages they were better than those that we find in Antiquity. Freedom of thought was greater in the Middle Ages, therefore, than is commonly believed: "Let us look not only at the appearance of the formulae, but go a little deeper. The doctrine of the Trinity was undoubtedly admitted everywhere, but it led one thinker to tritheism, another explained it as the union in the divinity of power, wisdom, and love, someone else thought of matter, form, and their union in substance, and others still saw it as an expression of the doctrine that God has ruled the world on the basis of different laws in his different powers and at different times. Of course nobody abandoned the cult of the divinity; but by searching for the right concept of God they arrived at different opinions, which sometimes came close to atheism, other times to acosmism; and by attempting to determine the properties of God, they deeply immersed themselves in psychology to declare that the will

depended on the intellect or vice versa, or even to state that they are one. We shall be forced to admit that the task that attended the medieval philosophers of outlining a theological system could in no way be satisfied, either with a purely formal procedure on the basis of given concepts, or by a servile dependence on the ideas of the past". (VII, pp. 128–129).

Ritter takes a position against Cousin, who had characterised the various periods of medieval thought by using the development of the debate over universals. In this way, he also distances himself from his master Schleiermacher, who had given universals a central role within scholastic philosophy. But, objects Ritter, the debate cannot take on this significance because it developed without rules, in a random and fragmentary way. Theological discussions were essential at that time, and the debate over universals had only a relative impact on them, "almost none" at the beginning (in the eleventh century), though undoubtedly more by the end (fourteenth century), contributing at the same time to accelerating the end of medieval philosophy. Moreover, there is no continuity between the forms of nominalism in the two periods. Indeed, the debate was initially of a terminological nature, concerning the interpretation of Aristotle; in the fourteenth century, however, it extended to epistemology and gave rise to the prevalence of sensism: "how, therefore", concludes Ritter, "can we base the division on a principle that has a single name, but is in reality dual?" (VII, p. 137).

For Ritter, the essence of medieval philosophy consists of "theology's attempt to develop its own system" (VII, p. 137). This attempt can already be seen in the early period, which comes after patristic philosophy and ends with John Scotus Eriugena, and includes the encyclopaedias of Isidore of Seville, Bede, and Rabanus Maurus. Eriugena is the figure who stands out above all the others and is defined as the highest testimony of philosophy in this period because of his attempt to unify the universe of Christian doctrine and the legacy of ancient philosophy. His originality lies in "the framework of his teaching", the four-fold division of nature which conforms to the tendency of theology to embrace both God and the world in a single vision. But this task is still carried out in an uncertain and ambiguous fashion. One clear ambiguity lies in the dual meaning of the concept of creating (*schaffen*), one theological and one natural: the fourth part of the *divisio naturae* derives from the synthesis of these two meanings, and is the return of nature neither creating nor created, depending on whether the reality of nature is considered as the effect of natural causes or as the effect of divine grace. If we add to this the fact that, like other writers of the high Middle Ages, John Scotus Eriugena mostly based himself on ancient doctrines and was therefore "foreign to his time", we can understand the lack of effect that his philosophy had. He only mentioned new factors in passing: "Thus his system was merely an audacious attempt. In the rigour of the division which was at the basis of his system, he merely proves that there is a scientific life among the modern peoples, a life which tended towards a more coherent organization of the knowledge that had been handed down" (VII, p. 295).

The second period (the eleventh and twelfth centuries) only showed isolated attempts at building a theological system, albeit well-founded attempts, as demonstrated by the work of Anselm of Aosta, who "marked a decisive turning point in the

systematic development of medieval philosophy" (VII, p. 316). But the prevailing Platonism was not up to the task. In the subsequent period, the influence of Aristotle became stronger, and this allowed medieval thought to reach its pinnacle. Ritter will not speak of a dependence on Aristotle because Aristotle was always used as a means to reach the principal aim of medieval philosophy, which was the systematic construction of philosophy. Scholastic philosophical principles were eclectic and not sectarian: "We would have a totally mistaken idea of the leaders of this theological school if we thought that they turned to Aristotle and the Arabs with the aim of taking all the truth from them. As for the results of their teaching, their principal guide was and remained Augustine. What they sought in Aristotle were essentially the general principles of science that could be applied to theology in an overall vision of worldly things, in the precise distinction between what belongs to the phenomenon and what belongs to the true essence of things. They made use of all this only as long as it did not contradict the doctrine of the Church; if they could not avoid a contrast in the interpretation of one aspect or another, then they let Aristotle go". (VII, pp. 148–149).

The development of philosophical debate in the thirteenth century was linear and coherent, as we can see from the doctrines of its three major exponents: Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus. The common basis of the three is the idea of the kingdom of grace as the necessary means for ascending from nature to God. The beginning and the end (nature and God) are the same, but the part in the middle is changeable and it concerns the use of reason to carry out man's ascent to God. Logic and metaphysics, which the scholastics elaborated creatively and which they quarrelled over with such animosity, were not ends in themselves, but rather tools of theology. This can be seen very clearly in the teachings of Albert the Great, both in his solution to the problem of universals and in the importance he now gave to matter. Albert's metaphysics was added alongside his fundamental theological and ethical inspiration, but it did not manage to fully amalgamate itself with it. In order to explain the possibility for man to reach the highest good, Albert is forced to turn not only to reason but also to supernatural illumination. The task of philosophy with respect to faith thus changes. Up to now, following Augustine, thinkers had tried to illuminate the content of faith with the aid of reason; now a more cautious approach makes an appearance, leading more to the separation than to the reconciliation of reason and faith, since "the scientific inadequacy of human powers is used as proof of the need for perfection by means of supernatural revelation" (VIII, p. 528). Thomas Aquinas attempted to perfect the theological system by using two principles which had already been used by Albert: the advance of knowledge from effects and the inferiority of effects compared to causes. Despite the continued existence of the old prejudice of the primacy of contemplation over practice, the domain of natural knowledge is further limited and the doctrines of the creation of the world and its beginning in time are defended as articles of faith against Aristotle's theories.

Duns Scotus was both more radical and more coherent than Aquinas. He showed that all the elements of the world tend towards their aim, God, and are therefore in harmony because there can be no contradictions in the good. The greatness of Duns Scotus lies in his balanced use of natural and supernatural means in the foundation

of his theological system: "This is the basis for the energy in the scientific striving that we find in Duns Scotus. It is based on the ideas that God has placed in this world and it follows unbending laws which we can know because God has revealed them in the world. Our intellect is in proportion to this world. It has the means to know eternal truths in metaphysical principles. In this way, we not only know ourselves but also the things outside us because they act on us on the basis of their nature. Indeed knowledge of nature is based on a general principle of the intellect, but the experience that derives from it is not perfect like knowledge derived from general concepts [...] Thus the natural intellect [of man] is limited, and it therefore needs supernatural enlightenment; if this takes place, that is, if God, the infinite object show himself to the intellect, then the natural intellect also becomes infinite and in it the foundations of all things can be understood" (VIII, pp. 536–537).

As in every life cycle, maturity is followed by decline, marked here by the breakdown of the balance between reason and faith, and by the prevalence of faith. This breakdown damaged both theology and philosophy. Now we come to the period in which nominalism prevailed, which Ritter associates with scepticism, rather than considering it as a forerunner of the scientific approach which was proper to the modern age. "This sceptical nominalism could only penetrate the tendency that science had in a destructive way. In effect, the opposition between natural and supernatural knowledge, which had been the focus earlier, was again removed, because nominalism did not leave anything to the realm of natural knowledge. We could perhaps suppose that the direction it took, which drew attention to the sensible basis of our knowledge and the need for experience for our thought, would have had a healthy effect on the science of the Middle Ages. This undoubtedly puts us on our guard against the tendency to empty abstraction and we might be tempted to think that it was a healthy counterbalance to the one-sidedness of the Middle Ages, which had neglected the history of nature and man. We cannot deny that nominalism had an influence in this sense; we can see in fact that almost all those who came afterwards who distinguished themselves in the so-called restoration of the sciences were followers of nominalism; indeed the nominalists can be considered to be the predecessors of those like Campanella, Bacon, or Locke. But we must note that such a favourable influence on the course of worldly sciences is found within the horizon of the nominalists; they only set out to limit natural knowledge to experience, to demonstrate its complete nullity" (VII, pp. 159–160).

The nature of modern philosophy is linked to the new historical conditions in Europe, as "not only the destinies of the philosophers but also the developments of philosophy depend on the progress of human civilization and on the broad social relations under which they take place" (IX, p. 3). Among the historical transformations taking place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the most important was the new role taken on by the papacy, a more politically limited role, no longer in opposition to the Emperor and the kings of Europe, but in competition with the small Italian principalities. On the other hand, the popes became promoters of the arts and the sciences, thus debasing their religious mission and creating the conditions for the Lutheran Reformation. Other decisive events were the arrival of the Greeks in Italy, the formation of national states with their own literature, the

affirmation of new social classes (among which the learned came to take on a position of importance), and religious reform, in the Protestant and Catholic areas.

Taken together, these factors led Europe away from the political and cultural models of the Middle Ages and created a new direction for science. If earlier science had turned exclusively towards God, now it moved equally exclusively in the direction of the world. Physics, therefore, is the model which inspired modern philosophy in its two expressions: experimental physics, which was the basis for empiricism, and mathematical physics, which initiated rationalism. Philosophy was thus subordinate to natural science and this is the dominant characteristic of modern thought, which not by chance achieved its most radical results in the eighteenth century, with Hume's scepticism and French materialism. The reference to Jacobi, Kant, and Fichte (and their struggle against modern naturalism, dogmatism, and scepticism) is an authoritative confirmation of Ritter's historical reconstruction: "Those who pay attention not only to the external methodological aspects of scientific research, but also know how to evaluate their impact on the constitution of systems, will not doubt that we must attempt to know and to explain the characteristic element of modern philosophy as its examination of everything on the basis of mathematical and physical principles. By the end of the period, the extent to which this research had penetrated the philosophical tradition emerges perhaps most clearly in the effort that was needed at the beginning of the following period to defend oneself against it. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi considered natural fatalistic explanation to be the only coherent philosophy, and he could only free himself from it by a leap into faith. Kant found that the old way of philosophizing only left a choice between scepticism and dogmatism, and that dogmatism led to the denial of freedom. Even Fichte saw determinism in dogmatism, and more recent idealistic philosophy only managed to affirm the freedom of the moral world after long, violent attempts" (IX, pp. 99–100).

The centuries of humanism and the Renaissance prepared for modern philosophy properly speaking. Ritter finds it difficult, however, to identify the characteristic of this period in the midst of all the many tendencies, aspirations, and thoughts which animated fifteenth- and sixteenth-century philosophy, unless it was perhaps the literary importance of philosophical works (*nur eine litterarische Wichtigkeit*). The prevalent tendency is, however, Platonic, represented by Nicolaus Cusanus, and its Kabbalistic and theosophic versions (Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Johann Reuchlin, Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim, and Thomas More). There were also other important movements, philology (Valla and Agricola) and Aristotelianism (Pomponazzi), which were destined to become stronger in the course of the sixteenth century. After the Reformation, there was an even greater variety of opinions, because there were not only Platonists and Kabbalists (Patrizi, Bruno, Weigel, Böhme, Van Helmont and Fludd), Aristotelians (Cesalpino, Zabarella, and Cremonini) and philologists (Vives, Nizolio, and Ramus), but also those who were inspired by the Reformation itself (Melanchthon and Paracelsus) or by Catholicism (Francesco Piccolomini), with a great attempt finally (by Campanella) to restore philosophy, which was to accompany the restoration of Catholicism.

The division of modern philosophy into the two currents of empiricism and rationalism is common to post-Kantian historiography of philosophy. What is

characteristic about Ritter's interpretation is his attempt to place both parts under a single denominator: the subordination of philosophy to physical science. The main figures in this process are, for empiricism, Bacon and Hume. Francis Bacon created an "epoch" by placing modern philosophy on the path of science. It was not his individual pieces of scientific research, which were no better and no different from those of the time, which gave Bacon's thought such effect, but rather his doctrine of method (*Methodenlehre*) with its complete elaboration of induction. It is not the individual aspects of his method which are important, but the negative part which urged caution, and even more his general plan for a reform of science and the firm commitment to carry out the new tasks which everyone expected from it. The extreme results of this scientific attitude were reached in the eighteenth century by Anglo-French sensism and materialism. This was a single coherent movement of thought which was inspired by Hume. Hume is in fact "the most decisive despiser of reason" (*der entschiedenste Verächter der Vernunft*) (XII, p. 360), as he subordinated all human life to the passions and impressions, that is, to physical nature. The principle of habit was to offer a link to arrive at reason by starting from nature, and hence contributed to the re-emergence of the "practical" tendency that philosophy had lost. Hume's thought remained suspended between these two tendencies, the naturalistic and the ethical, with the prevalence of the naturalistic in conformity with the orientation of the period. Ritter does not forget to put us on our guard against this: "To a philosophy who was used to seeing only the effects of nature everywhere, the progress of rational life must have appeared like a miracle. This is how they appear in effect in Hume's teaching" (XII, p. 364).

The key moments in the rationalistic approach are the philosophy of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. What is particular about Ritter's interpretation is the link that he creates between empiricism and rationalism. The position of Descartes is significant here because he is not presented as the initiator of idealism or the precursor of later German philosophy (as he was by the Kantians and the Hegelians), but as a scientist who wanted to find in mathematics more certain principles to explain natural reality than those which were offered by experience. The Cartesian system is, in effect, of a physical type, and metaphysical investigation, which is contained in it, is a tool of natural science. "It is beyond doubt that he mainly aimed at the fruitful application of mathematics; indeed, as he states, he intended to reduce physics completely to geometry. His philosophical work is reduced to these physical demands, as he wished to establish the limits and the principles of physics. He asks us, therefore, to apply our spirit for once to metaphysics and then to limit ourselves to fixing the results in our memory, so that we can then carry out physical investigation according to the mathematical method, no longer disturbed by metaphysics and without having to worry about the higher demands of our spirit" (XI, pp. 86–87).

It was not Descartes, but Spinoza and Leibniz whom Ritter most admired among the modern philosophers. Spinoza is in truth connected to Descartes (although he only took his language and method) and hence also to Hobbes, but not to Giordano Bruno or to ancient and medieval thought. Spinoza's thought is basically independent and original: "Spinoza simply goes beyond his predecessors, whom he does not cite because in general he rarely examines the opinions of others, unless they

impose themselves as the current opinion. His system, as it is set out, appears only as the fruit of his reflection, even if we must recognise that it is also the fruit of its time" (XI, pp. 175–186). Spinoza's system is the result of a difficult balancing act between two opposite tendencies: the first and more original but little understood at the time, is the direction towards the universal and the attempt to satisfy the rational demand for a first cause and a single substance of all things; the second, which was influenced by the Cartesian school with its predilection for empirical investigation, goes in the opposite direction and pursues the particular and recognises its reality. The two directions of thought are not resolved into each other, but they each independently determine the two levels of philosophy, the theoretical and the practical: "[Spinoza] only attempts to follow up on that ideal need in his scientific work; but for him everything that is realizable is found only in the domain of the finite, of the necessarily reciprocal limitations of worldly things. By applying himself to these, he found himself caught up in the tendencies of his time, he explains the spirit with bodily movements, and his doctrines cannot be distinguished in any essential way from the physical explanations of Descartes or the ethical doctrines of Hobbes. We should not be surprised, therefore, if Spinoza's teaching was used in the period that immediately followed only to encourage naturalism" (XI, pp. 288–289).

While Spinoza is substantially a Cartesian, Leibniz turns to the rationalistic spirit of his time to moderate his fundamental inspiration, theosophy, which was certainly not modern, and which his doctrine of substance depends on. In effect, monadology represents "the central point of his thought and the most original contribution of his spirit" (XII, p. 185). Leibniz attempted to explain the nature and the life of substances in Cartesian terms, in an analogy with Descartes's "I think". A different, and in certain respects opposite, notion of substance constitutes the difference between Spinoza and Leibniz's thought, which Ritter considers in any case "the most perfect forms of rationalism in modern philosophy" (XII, p. 207). On one hand, in substance Leibniz "sees the living and spontaneous force that is the basis of phenomena and is in constant becoming with them" (XII, p. 189); for Spinoza, on the other hand, "the one substance is not a force, which would be the foundation of spontaneous activities or the support of phenomena; it is simply and absolutely the pure and simple truth" (XII, p. 190). What derives from this is a different way of conceiving science, Leibniz's greater difficulty in explaining the principle of unity, and Spinoza's inability to understand the multiple. Leibniz expresses a problematic concept of God, since he explains the creation of the imperfect world by the inability to put into effect the totality of the possible, but his concept of substance reveals itself to be useful in the field of experience and empirical science.

Unlike his master Schleiermacher and many contemporaries, who considered Spinoza's system to be "aesthetically" superior to that of Leibniz, Ritter seems to side with Leibniz in the contest between these two 'great men' of rationalism. Another argument to support this is the greater effect that Leibniz's thought had historically: "Our task is not to judge aesthetic impressions that are used as criteria to judge philosophical systems; but we believe that Leibniz's idea of a system of concepts in the divine intellect can be equivalent to the great simplicity of God as conceived of by Spinoza, and that the ideas of the contingent in the divine intellect,

to which Leibniz attempted to lead every worldly thing, albeit in the serious conflict into which they seem to fall, gives his concept greater life and movement than we find in the infinite dead attributes of God in Spinoza" (XII, p. 207).

Up until this point it has been a "history" of philosophy. With Kant a new period begins, which, however, Ritter states he cannot describe (in the first volume of the *Geschichte*, which came out in 1829), because it had not yet actually passed but was still current and alive in the philosophical debate. The cycle of development of German thought is considered to have ended by the 1850s and it is the subject of the *Versuch zur Verständigung über die neueste deutsche Philosophie seit Kant* (cf. on the same subject: *Die christliche Philosophie*, II, pp. 465–871).

With Kant and above all Fichte, philosophy underwent a true revolution, both in its form and its content. Three men, more men of letters than philosophers, influenced this process, introducing an interest in Spinoza into German culture: Lessing, Herder, and Jacobi. Naturally this is a revised and corrected form of Spinozism (through Leibniz) by Lessing above all, who interpreted substance in dynamic rather than static terms, as "perennially creative life" (*Versuch*, p. 22). Spinoza gave German philosophy its matter (an attention to the Absolute), and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* gave it the form. Fichte's "doctrine of science" derives from a synthesis of these two components, and it contained all the characteristics of subsequent idealistic philosophy and, for Ritter, represents true progress compared to Kant's position (p. 61). The limits of Fichte's system, however, did not pass completely unnoticed: its prevalently subjective dimension, its lack of consideration for nature, and its pursuit and defence of the freedom of reason in the field of ethics alone (p. 41). Further progress was therefore made by Schelling (but only his early work is considered here), who managed to overcome the limitations of Fichte's doctrine of nature as non-I. The two principal merits of Schelling are his contribution to the consideration of nature in non-mechanistic terms and the impulse he gave to the Romantic school with the idea of art, while his most serious shortcomings were the insufficiency of his method and the uncertainty of form (p. 85).

Hegel remedied these defects of a formal nature, presenting himself as "the systematic man of the school"; his was progress towards the most extreme form of idealism, but he did not truly go beyond previous forms of idealism (see for example the comparison between Fichte's ethics and Hegel's treatment of the objective spirit, which come down clearly in favour of Fichte: *Versuch*, p. 106). The form of dialectic gives the system a pretence of absoluteness, since it is in conformity with the necessary development of reason; but it is highly questionable that reason comprehends all of reality, objects Ritter, since, as Hegel himself admits, the entire ambit of the particular remains outside it. The fundamental criticism of Hegel concerns his concept of "absolute philosophy", the claim that the system is complete and perfect, while in reality it presents itself as rigid and badly divided internally. Among various errors, what stands out are those relating to the last part of the system, namely those internal distinctions within the philosophy of the spirit that Ritter finds highly questionable. The distinction between subjective, objective, and absolute spirit is itself inadmissible, because the spirit is at the same time subjective and objective; but what must be rejected above all is the position of philosophy with respect to religion

and art within the absolute spirit. The excessive importance given both to the absolute spirit and philosophy are, in fact, the logical consequence of the Hegelian system, which can, however, take credit for having thoroughly developed idealism, to the point of revealing its internal contradiction: "The speculative thought of God is the quintessence of the spiritual life, it is the eternal truth of every being and of all becoming. There is only one uncertainty left in the thought of this very thought. The speculative thought of God has to be an eternal process, but this is contradictory. The process presupposes becoming; if we speak of an eternal process, becoming is annulled. The movement of the system is satisfied by the contradiction which is concentrated in its conclusion. It ends with a big problem: how can we think of the process as an eternal process" (p. 113).

At the end of his overview of the development of idealism, Ritter mentions two philosophers who had opposed it: Schleiermacher and Herbart. Schleiermacher is still close to idealism in many ways, even though he is against Hegel's absolute philosophy; Herbart decisively counters idealism with realism. There is a fairly objective assessment of Schleiermacher which also contains some criticism. His framework of philosophical knowledge is idealistic and it has applications in an ethics which is based, however, on the general principles of science, namely dialectic, which proceeds in turn, as it had done in Fichte and Schelling, from the idea of knowledge. But Schleiermacher (and this is his true contribution to philosophy) stressed the fact that our thinking depends on several factors, such as language and individual particularity, which makes it impossible to acquire a knowledge that has universal validity. In this way, he rejects the possibility of building a system and "his dialectic is transformed into a technique for thought, which has to demonstrate how we come to know the defects in our thinking, how we can help to come closer to knowledge without ever managing to acquire it" (p. 119). Herbart's criticism of idealism is even more radical. He did not accept a single being, but the plurality and multiplicity of beings, and he turned his attention above all to empirical individuals. This was his positive contribution, but at the same time he did not recognise the reality of the internal life of beings such as freedom, which, for Ritter, is the great legacy of idealism.

In attempting to form an overall assessment of the last seventy years of German philosophy, Ritter recognises its importance and vitality. If it did not manage to entirely resolve the task it had set itself, then at least it set out on the right road. The principal error was committed by Hegel, who sought to realise the perfection of knowledge in a system, and which must instead remain only "an ideal of reason". The *Versuch zur Verständigung über die neueste deutsche Philosophie* ends with a statement of a historicist nature, as it gives every system of the past a role in historical development (understood in an organicistic sense): "These more recent systems cannot escape the destiny which all philosophical systems have so far met with. It is the destiny of fertile seeds which have to be thrown onto the ground and buried. They are scattered and they die in order to develop a new germ of life and bear new fruit. These systems will be almost forgotten for a long period; but a grateful posterity will enjoy their true thoughts and it will remember Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, just as it has not forgotten the names of Plato and Aristotle" (pp. 135–136).

2.2.4.4 The history of philosophy as a historical discipline has the aim of allowing us to learn over a short period of time what humanity has achieved after long, hard endeavour. This aim can be reached more easily, explains Ritter in the 'Vorrede' to the first volume, through a direct knowledge of the sources, which alone allow us to "re-live Antiquity in itself". But this requires competence and hard work, and is only accessible to specialists. This, then, is the sense of the general history of philosophy: to make the historical sources available to those who are not able on their own to possess them directly. The historian presupposes the work of the philologist, but he goes beyond it, transforming a reading of the documents and criticism of the sources into a narrative. Ritter's historical works, therefore, contain "research into history rather than history itself" (I, 'Vorrede', p. x). This is also due to the nature of "philosophical communication", which always requires interpretation: "As it sometimes appears ambiguous, obscure, or confused, and never completely sufficient, it needs to be integrated and explained, and the fact that this cannot happen separately from history itself can be seen from the uncertainty of such research, the results of which are never definitive (I, 'Vorrede', p. xi).

Criticism of the sources is the necessary condition for historical narrative and hence also for reconstructing the doctrines, but it is not sufficient. The doctrines have to be interpreted, discussed, and explained to find the broadest sense that connects historical facts to one another and leads us to understand these doctrines as an organic whole. In effect, in the course of the work there is a brief reference to criticism of the sources at the beginning of each chapter and only rarely, as in the case of Socrates, for example, is it treated in its own right. The different historiographical interpretations are mentioned even more rarely, with the exception of the long discussion on the meaning of medieval thought, which gives Ritter the opportunity to cite other historians of philosophy, from Brucker to Cousin, albeit in a critical way.

The educational aim of historical work leads Ritter to privilege general aspects of historiographical interpretation, rather than biographical details or illustrations of the individual doctrines. But the "general" that attracts his attention is not the common element, abstract from the individual, but rather the essence of the doctrine (as he had controversially already stated in the *Geschichte der jonischen Philosophie*: "Einsicht in das Wesen der jonischen Lehren", this is the declared aim). It is a general that produces the particular and explains it. To understand the essence of a philosophy, for Ritter, means finding the systematic connection, the "pure product of reason" which, as he explains in the 'Einleitung', characterises philosophical research. Because of this methodological aspect, Ritter's work falls into the tradition of modern historiography of philosophy, which since the time of Brucker had seen the "reconstruction" of the system as the task proper to the historian. Compared to Brucker and other historians (such as Tiedemann and Tennemann), Ritter insists more on the organic nature of the system, understood as a force that operates from the inside, makes it live, and produces its particular contents. An example of this is Ritter's description of Plato's philosophy, which, as we have seen, is animated and collected into a unity by means of dialectic, understood as "the knowledge or science of the other sciences".

The search for the systematic dimension also affects the division of the historiographical material. The traditional three-fold division of philosophy into logic, physics, and ethics is integrated with the addition of an introductory part, entitled 'Ueber die Philosophie und ihre Theile' or 'Ueber die Philosophie überhaupt', which aims to determine the basic idea supporting and justifying the entire edifice of the system. In Plato this coincides with dialectic, in Aristotle with the idea of science, in Augustine and the representatives of Christian philosophy it is found in the particular relationship between philosophy and theology, and in Descartes and the modern philosophers it is the link between philosophy and natural science. Ritter returns to this concept later, in the conclusion, to evaluate the coherence of the system based on this premise and to show the progress thus made to the development of philosophy.

At the end of each chapter, at the end of each book, and again at the end of the various periods, there are conclusions, variously entitled: *Uebersich*, *Schluß*, *Schlußbemerkungen*, *Schlußbetrachtungen*, *Beurtheilung*, and *Uebersicht und Schlussbetrachtungen*. These evaluate the "internal" conditions of philosophical research, the consequences that derive from having adopted a certain concept of philosophy, and finally the relationship with the previous and subsequent concepts. Recourse to this type of motivation to explain the decline of Patristic thought at the end of the section on the Fathers is significant. In philosophy, Ritter observes, there are always two elements present, one polemical and one constructive, but the prevalence of one leads to the decline of the other. Observing the dynamic between these two factors in the thought of the Fathers, Ritter describes its full philosophical value and at the same time the conditions of its necessary decline: "In Patristic philosophy, the polemical element has always had the upper hand; it could not be otherwise because of its position with regard to paganism and ancient philosophy. By combating them and raising up the concept of the Church against them, the philosophy [of the Fathers] achieved its external effect, but it did not manage to develop the result of its struggle into a solid and conscious scientific connection. And this is one of the most significant reasons for its decline" (VI, pp. 605–606).

Ritter is well aware of the relationship between philosophy and its external conditions. The 'Einleitung' had begun with an examination of the link between the history of philosophy and the history of humanity. But once the existence of this relationship has been generally admitted, given that the history of philosophy is only a part of the whole history of humanity, Ritter becomes more uncertain in describing the link with precision, showing indeed a certain aversion to a "systematic" solution of the type formulated by Hegel (for whom, as we know, it is always the same universal spirit which acts both in the history of peoples and in the history of philosophy). Philosophy will be more dependent on external conditions the further it is from its maturity, and hence it will be particularly so at the beginning and at the end of every historical process. In the field of Greek thought this happened in the pre-Socratic period and then above all during its decline, first among the Sophists and then, definitively, with the Neoplatonists. Modern philosophy on the whole is in this situation of external dependence since it has not yet reached its maturity, despite the long progress made from the Patristic period onwards.

In describing the link between philosophy and the political and cultural conditions in Greek civilization, Ritter goes back to Schleiermacher's ideas. He is more original with regard to modern philosophy, however, which he sees as being "externally" conditioned by the development of nationalities in Europe. Philosophy initially presents the "dispersed" character of the Italian nation, to then take on a more unitary aspect with the formation of the two schools of rationalism and empiricism, in harmony with the European transition from the political form of the principality to that of the national monarchies. This movement is reflected in philosophy through the mediation of language: modern philosophy, in fact, has taken on a national form, progressively abandoning the universal language of the learned and moving towards the living language of the people. We cannot exclude the hypothesis that philosophy might use the symbolic universal language of mathematics, but historically, observes Ritter, the opposite has happened, and philosophy has made use of the national languages in an increasingly decisive way. But now we have come to a turning point in the process (Ritter was thinking of Europe after the Congress of Vienna) and philosophy is moving towards its maturity, attempting to reconcile the needs of the nation with cosmopolitan expectations: "When each people has created its own literature and has reached political unity, philosophy too must impose a peculiar expression on itself. We must not for this reason fear that our peoples will forget their reciprocal links. Their general culture, which is based on common historical foundations and is also pervaded by the idea that all men belong to the same species and the same moral realm, will be enough to keep them united. Even their philosophy is full of this idea, in which we find an exhortation not to neglect that which has a universal value within national peculiarity" (IX, p. 136).

Historical progress is thought of according to a biological model, with some hesitations concerning the modern age which has not yet finished its life cycle, and in a more insistent and precise way for the ancient period, Greece in particular, which constitutes a fully completed whole. "This progress", states Ritter when introducing the division of Greek thought, "conforms to the spiritual development of man, in the individual and the species" (I, p. 182). Besides being used to determine the various periods, the analogy of life offers a criterion for establishing how the transition from one age to another takes place. Just as every age is preceded by a crisis, which is more violent the younger the organism is, so philosophy develops through various crises which mark the transition from youth to maturity and then to old age: the first is violent and rapid, and the second is slow and inexorable. "Just as the transition from one age of life to another is only known physically by illness or a state of precarious health, so in the spiritual life the beginning of a new state of development is usually only announced by the corruption of previous efforts. But the greater the vital force of youth the more violent is its unhealthy concussion, and the more rapidly it moves towards a cure. We must therefore expect a brief but strong degeneration between the first and second period, and a longer, less violent transition between the second and third, but one that is much more fatal. Precisely what we expected actually happened" (I, p. 185).

This type of explanation conducted systematically sometimes creates the impression of an *a priori* assessment which externally conditions the examination of the

historical material. It is an impression that Ritter himself seeks to avoid, both by giving documentary confirmation of all his interpretations and by warning the reader of the limits of all historical explanation. In effect, Ritter had accused the "construction of history" method of being *a priori* and arbitrary; the ideal historian is certainly he who becomes "the complete organ of the philosophy of his time" (I, p. 28), he who knows how to connect all the facts "in the way most possibly coherent" (I, p. 31), but also he who shows himself to be aware of the problematic and temporary nature of his judgements. The historical method uses hypotheses and suggestions more frequently than definitive sentences, as Ritter stresses in the conclusion to the chapter on Indian philosophy: "There is no conclusion; I have merely made hypotheses, whose merit, here as everywhere, simply consists of calling attention to one point or another, but to consolidate which requires further research. The hypotheses can serve as attempts or as observations. In general, here we are trying to place doubt on observations which are too certain, more than claiming to state something certain ourselves. Starting from the philosophical consideration of the history of humanity, we could perhaps establish something more solid; but we prefer to abstain from mixing philosophical and historical research, when we are only concerned with establishing the facts" (I, pp. 136–137).

Historical research is characterised by its use of the empirical and experimental method; first comes the fact, then the rational principle that explains it. An overall reading of the work confirms that this rule, which is stated in the *Einleitung*, has been generally observed. This can also be deduced from the importance given to the "fortune" of the works of an author or a system in successive historiographical evaluation. The value of a philosophy undoubtedly depends in the first place on the originality and the profundity of the thought; and here we see those whom Ritter considers to be the greatest philosophers, something that also transpires from the amount of space allotted to them: Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Duns Scotus, Spinoza, and Leibniz. But we must also take into account the historical effectiveness of a thought, which makes it worthy of being noted and studied even though it may be devoid of originality, as in the case of Cicero. This level of reading also affects the evaluation of the doctrines. It is not rare for Ritter to preface his conclusive judgement with a brief excursus which is an interesting foray into the history of the historiography of philosophy *ante litteram* (understood however only as the history of the "fortune" of a writer, and not of the interpretations).

We cannot always agree with Ritter, however, as in the case of his excessively resolute judgement over the difference in legacy between Plotinus and Proclus: "If we can say that Plotinus had a significant influence on the philosophy of the following age, we cannot demonstrate a similar influence by Proclus" (IV, p. 723). The state of historical research did not allow the importance of Proclus for medieval and modern philosophy to be fully appreciated (although Hegel showed a very different interest in him in the same period). Ritter's comparison between Spinoza and Leibniz, however, can still be considered valid. Spinoza's weak influence is explained by internal dualities and contrasts that were not entirely resolved, while Leibniz would have clearly indicated to his contemporaries and successors the way to follow in order to overcome the *aporiae* of modern thought. Of the "two most

developed forms of modern rationalism” Ritter gives primacy to Leibniz, precisely because of his capacity to determine subsequent thought in a positive sense: “In comparing their philosophical systems, what guides us is the question of whether they were more or less suited to representing the set of scientific concepts of their time and to contributing to perfecting them. I must maintain that time has resolved the question concerning Spinoza and Leibniz in favour of the latter. While Spinoza had little influence on his time, Leibniz’s thought had significant repercussions”. (XII, p. 208).

2.2.5 The inspiration behind Ritter’s historiography comes from the teaching of Schleiermacher, as was recognised right from the appearance of his very first works. In the review of the *Geschichte der jonischen Philosophie*, which appeared in the *Heidelberger Jahrbücher der Literatur*, this “highly important contribution” is made to depend on the “new life” which opened up in Germany thanks to Schleiermacher and Boeckh, and which found “a model and guide” in the former above all. This, observes the anonymous reviewer, does not diminish Ritter’s merits, but he is defined finally as a “learned, autonomous emulator” of his great master (HJL, LXXI, 1824, 1, p. 188). If Ritter’s contribution is to have carried out Schleiermacher’s historiographical plan in its entirety (notable above all in the long analytical treatment of “Christian” thought), given the vastness of the endeavour, it was impossible for there not to have been some twisting or misunderstanding of individual themes or aspects, in apparent or real contrast with the direct historical vision so strongly proclaimed. Although he notes Ritter’s good intention not to introduce “anything foreign” into the historical narrative, Hegel, for example (who knew and quoted the *Geschichte der jonischen Philosophie*, and not the *Geschichte der Philosophie*), still points out the way in which Aristotle is twisted when Thales’s concept of nature is defined as “dynamic” (as opposed to the “mechanical” concept attributed to Anaximander). “Nothing of all this”, observes Hegel, “is said of Thales by the Ancients. This is the immediate consequence, but it cannot be justified historically. We cannot transform ancient philosophy into something completely different from what it was originally with such deductions” (Michelet¹, I, pp. 63–64; see *Models*, III, p. 933, for analogous criticism of Fries).

Ritter not only produced the most wide-ranging and complete work on the history of philosophy to have appeared in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century, carrying out Schleiermacher’s plan in a concrete and systematic fashion, but, in accordance with this plan, he also attempted to respond to the theoretical problems relating to the concept of the history of philosophy, problems which, as we know, were profoundly felt in this period. The central point around which Ritter’s solution pivots concerns the possibility of creating a synthesis between the historical and the philosophical method, in such a way as to reconcile the immediate “historical vision” with the idea of the totality of development, implicit in the very concept of a general history of philosophy. Any hypothesis of a unity, which would reduce one point of view to the other, is rejected, but so is the opposite solution, which leads us to deny any relationship between the systems and the doctrines. Though he keeps historiography anchored to the “facts”, Ritter turns to philosophy

in order to explain and interpret them, and considers the two poles to be in a relationship of a hermeneutical kind. Every philosophy only makes sense if it is placed within the totality of historical development, and this totality in turn only exists in the unity of the parts, in their living relationship, and not abstractly and independently of them.

Even with its problematic nature, the solution put forward by Ritter attracted the (not always critical) attention of the scholars of the time and it was subject to debate and analysis. This can be seen in the lengthy review of the *Geschichte der Philosophie* which appeared in the "Heidelberger Jahrbücher der Literatur" by the specialist in the ancient historiography of philosophy (and Platonism in particular), Karl Friedrich Hermann. Hermann starts by stating the opposition between history and philosophy, an opposition which the entire culture of the time insisted on (cf., among others, Ranke and Hegel), but which undermines the very possibility of a discipline like the history of philosophy. Indeed, a history of the various philosophies or systems, without a "living" connection with the development of philosophy, would be a kind of "biography" written by outsiders, and not an "autobiography" (*Selbstbiographie*), as philosophy might claim to have, since, as it is still living, it has good reason to want to "describe its destinies and its degrees of development itself, or, at least to be able to show its historiographer the methods and the points of view on the basis of which it wishes to see its own development represented" (HJL, 1829, 2, p. 980). Hermann sees the connection between history and philosophy in the common concept of "reality" to be understood "in all its forms and ramifications". Now, if we want to grasp the reality of philosophy in the past, we cannot refer exclusively to external causes and circumstances, which are in themselves accidental; but we must grasp the internal necessity that has operated and "really" produced the philosophy, even if it has always acted through individuals. "This necessity", observes Hermann, "is what gives existence to all philosophical efforts and, in internal vital processes, has produced the attempts to move from fragments of an unsustainable system to one that is more satisfactory. The coherent representation of this necessity must therefore constitute the main focus of attention of the historian of philosophy, even though he cannot neglect the external circumstances that arise from the other factor of reality" (p. 986).

External and internal causality: the language is that of Ritter and Brandis, but also that of Hegel and, in general, that of the historiography of the period. The difference does not lie in the primacy of internal causes, recognised by everyone, but rather in the possibility or not of completely integrating the two types of explanation. Hermann sides with Ritter. A complete integration between political and philosophical historiography cannot be documented as a form of historical research; a task of this kind could perhaps be given to a "philosophy of the history of philosophy", or a "philosophy of the political history of humanity", but "absolutely not to the domain of the historian, who must only describe the causes which operate in reality, only the movement of the mechanism, and not the master who made it" (p. 987). There is the need to demonstrate, and it is the need that took form historically in the course of the development of thought. The task of the history of philosophy is to discover this need, and not to demonstrate the need for such a need, a task

which belongs, if anything, to the philosophy of the history of philosophy. The first will never be definitive; indeed, philosophy will not be able to impose an objective, definitive, and absolute vision, since, living in the present, it comes about by undergoing temporal change. First place, therefore, is given to the history of philosophy with respect to philosophy, with expressions that echo the programme outlined by Schleiermacher for the Berlin Academy of Sciences (cf. above, p. 30): “a history of philosophy conducted according to these principles can be considered a *ktema es aei*, a treasure for all times, which can be continually overcome and annulled as for the accidental nature of the material, but as for the method, it does not need to turn to philosophy, since philosophy itself has recognised the rationality of reality in all its degrees” (p. 989).

Ritter’s *Geschichte der Philosophie* is judged by Hermann to be a treasure of this kind, available to everyone (cf. Leibniz’s definition of “public treasury”: *Models*, I, pp. 379–380). He hopes it will enjoy the same destiny as the Sabine women (to pacify the opposing tendencies of historiography and philosophy) and recognises that it contains “philosophical strength and depth, historical sense and erudition, critical tact and clear, coherent, and brilliant expression” (p. 989). Considering the individual interpretations, he becomes less enthusiastic and lists the reasons for his dissent. These mainly concern Ritter’s image of Plato, which he believes to have been negatively influenced by two points of view (which derive from Schleiermacher): on one hand, the exclusive and immediate connection of Plato’s philosophy to that of Socrates; on the other, the fact that he did not consider the origin and development of the system. Many contradictions and ambiguities would have been avoided if Ritter had paid attention to the order of the dialogues and if he had based his interpretation of the doctrines on this (Hermann, as we know, considered the succession of the dialogues to be a reflection of the evolution of Plato’s thought in three phases: the Socratic, the mature, and the Pythagorean: cf. K.F. Hermann, *Geschichte und System der platonischen Philosophie* (Heidelberg 1839).

Other reviews were not quite so positive. The review that appeared in the “Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung” credited Ritter’s *Geschichte* with having responded to an effective need of the time to integrate the study of philosophical problems with suitable historical information, given the “lack of self-sufficiency” of the present with respect to the past. Ritter certainly went beyond the limited perspective of Buhle or Tennemann (too openly Kantian), but his work was still insufficient from a philosophical point of view. His philological accuracy and diligence in gathering sources and witnesses are noteworthy, but his narrative method is inadequate both because of its style (defined as dry, wordy, and monotonous), and above all for his inability to grasp “the unity which links the multiplicity of different philosophical expressions into a whole” (ALZ, 1832, cols 457–458; cf. also NLLZ, 1830, n. 53, col. 421). Ritter reacted against these judgements, which questioned the “philosophical” value of his work, in the last of several reviews of his own work, which he wrote for the “Göttingische Anzeigen”. Here he claimed that the significance of his work lay in the full and exclusive acceptance of the historical point of view, on the basis of which alone the systems can be evaluated: “It was my intent to carry out purely historical criticism, in which the judgement of the historian could be

supported by the very development of the doctrines, each of them considered in itself, in its peculiarity, and thought in its connection with the progressive development of philosophical culture. A purely historical criticism of this kind can no longer be adopted when we start to come to the more recent philosophical movements in which we are still involved and whose aims have still not manifested themselves in all their development” (GGA, 1853, p. 1618).

Evidence of the reasonable success enjoyed by the *Geschichte der Philosophie* in Europe are its French and English translations. The first, concerning the history of ancient philosophy (edited by Claude-Joseph Tissot (1801–1876), known above all for his work popularising German philosophy in France), came out in Paris in 1835–1836 and was well received, as we know from a lengthy Italian review by L. Blanch, ‘Sulla storia della filosofia antica di Enrico Ritter, tradotta in francese da Tissot. Discorsi’, *Il progresso* (Naples), XVI, 1837, n. 31, pp. 3–29; XIX, 1838, n. 37, pp. 55–84 (now in Blanch, pp. 279–371). As well as a biography of Ritter, Tissot’s ‘Préface’ contains a history of the historiography of philosophy from Stanley to Hegel, at the pinnacle of which we find Ritter’s work. The judgements on the virtues of the translated work are somewhat predictable: its knowledge of the sources, understanding of the works, historical criticism, placing of the philosophical thought within the background of the history of civilizations, and its study of the influence of the doctrines on the artistic, literary and practical life. Tissot insists on the “philosophical” value of the *Geschichte der Philosophie*, pointing out the work of “organization” of the historical material (defined also as the “physiology of history”) which tends to find “the unity and the progressive development of the life of philosophy in the historical world” (*Histoire de la philosophie ancienne*, I, p. xxxiv). Previous historians, observes Tissot, had not fulfilled this task because of their preoccupation with systems, which made their historical work depend on the dominant systems of their time. Ritter’s capacity to accept and animate the different philosophical positions is not only due to his philological and historical and critical competence, but it is the fruit of his philosophical sensitivity, which is not “exclusive” but “comprehensive” (*intelligent*), not only receptive, but capable of receiving and expressing every impression “starting from a point of view which is superior to all the other impressions” (p. xxxiii). The overall opinion of the work is thus: “Written as far as possible on primary sources and always accompanied, so to speak, by justificatory additions, it aspires above all to render the physiognomy of each school and each great figure perfectly, and in any case it almost always puts the reader in a condition to be able to judge the school, the philosophy, or the historian immediately on his own” (*ibid.*). Tissot’s verdict is quoted in summary by Picavet (*L’histoire de la philosophie*, p. 4).

With Zeller’s article *Die Geschichte der alten Philosophie* (1843) we move from the reception of the work (or *Wirkungsgeschichte*) to its interpretation. The affinity between Ritter and Schleiermacher’s historiography is undeniable, states Zeller, even if there are differences in tone and attitude. Ritter could certainly not be expected to have the same critical acumen and perspicacity as Schleiermacher, but he did possess a specific competence in the field of historiography and a wide ranging and complete erudition. The historical method, however, is basically the same; the two

writers also agree in their general vision of the task of historiography, the periodization, the prevalent tendency towards the individual, and an uncertainty with regard to overall historical development. Zeller recognises the “great qualities” of Ritter’s work and he accepts its basic approach and many of its interpretations. If anything, he questions the historiographical theory and does not agree with Ritter’s rejection of speculation in historical work, which appears to him to be too decisive. The speculative point of view is required by history itself, and it derives from a recognition of the regularity of development and the internal rational connection between historical facts; it depends, therefore, on a fact which cannot be explained in itself if we do not turn to reasons of a philosophical nature. Ritter’s distinction between philosophy and historiography is certainly legitimate, observes Zeller, since philosophy proceeds from the general towards the particular, and historiography gains its general vision by starting from a consideration of the individual. But, precisely because they are opposites, the two methods can be integrated and sustain one another. The reciprocal penetration (*Durchdringung*) of historiography and philosophy, the empirical and the speculative, is the model which Zeller himself aspires to, a model closer to Schleiermacher’s hermeneutical circularity than the dialectical identity of Hegel, and it is finally the basis of Ritter’s perspective, even though he gave too much importance to the empirical and erudite rather than the speculative in the relationship between the two (cf. Zeller, p. 43).

In more recent works on the history of the historiography of philosophy, Ritter has been given a marginal position. Banfi merely cites his name together with that of Brandis and Braniß, among the “epigones” of the school of Schleiermacher, who made further steps towards freeing the historical aspect from the preoccupation with systems (Banfi, pp. 123–124). Gadamer, on the other hand, notes the influence of Schleiermacher’s theories on the interpretation of the pre-Socratics, in the definition of the overall framework in particular (*I Presocratici*, p. 29), and L. Geldsetzer sees these premises in the hermeneutical doctrine (cf. *Philosophiegeschichte*, col. 915). M. Gueroult rightly sees Ritter’s historiography as a successor to that of Ranke as well as Schleiermacher, in opposition to the constructivist and *a priori* tendencies of Schelling and Hegel. Ritter’s work is *remarquable* for its erudition and criticism and because it clearly stigmatized “the ridiculous confusion between the historical and philosophical method”, strenuously defending the positive, historical and empirical nature of the historiography of philosophy (Gueroult, II, p. 489).

The opposition in principle between the tendencies represented by the two schools (those of Schleiermacher and Hegel) and the substantial integration on the level of historiographical practice by their followers (Ritter, Brandis and Zeller, and Marbach) are the basic themes of an article by Gunther Scholtz: ‘Zur Darstellung der griechischen Philosophie bei den Schülern Hegels und Schleiermachers’ (in *Philosophie und Hermeneutik*, pp. 289–311). On one hand, the Hegelians are led to treat historiography from a speculative point of view, losing sight of real history, and on the other Schleiermacher and his followers concentrate on the facts, with the risk of no longer coming into contact with philosophy. But both accept the principle that philosophy cannot exist without history (like the present without any relationship to the past) and even those, like Ritter, who stress the primacy of the historical,

cannot carry on regardless of assumptions of a speculative nature. Scholz identifies these assumptions in the circular relationship between philosophy and the history of philosophy set out by Schleiermacher, which requires, if not a true concept, then at least a pre-concept (*Vor-Begriff*) of philosophy as a guide to historical research. At the basis of the “re-construction” of history carried out by Ritter is the idea of the identity of human nature over time, a metaphysical idea that constitutes the assumption of the unity of the general and the particular, the condition of every form of knowledge, and by virtue of which Schleiermacher had rooted hermeneutics in dialectic.

The search for regularity in development, which is undoubtedly the aim of historiography, both in Schleiermacher and Hegel’s version, is not carried out by Ritter by following a process of a deductive and systematic type, but by proceeding inductively, ascertaining the facts and moving, as a *terminus ad quem*, to laws and explanatory principles. In this sense, as we have seen, it is legitimate to speak of the reconstruction of history rather than its construction. What derives from this is also the distinction between internal and external history, which Hegel tended to exclude, by reducing the latter to the former. The impossibility of perfectly integrating the two perspectives (or the two forms of causality) is linked to an awareness that philosophy is not an independent spiritual activity, closed within subjective limits, but it depends of the conditions of intersubjective life and therefore is subordinate to historical conditioning, to language in the first place and to related spiritual activities, like art, religion, and science. The common recognition of these historical conditions brings these two historiographical tendencies together, on a methodological level, and they are sustained, respectively, by Hegel’s philosophy and Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics (see Scholtz, *Zur Darstellung*, pp. 308–311, where there is an interesting comparison between the first and the second edition of Zeller’s *Philosophie der Griechen*). This homogeneous historiographical basis was then carried forward by the ideas and developments of the neo-Kantian school, paving the way for the great period of German (and European) historiography of the late nineteenth century.

2.2.6 On Ritter’s life and thought: K. Prantl, ADB, XXVIII, pp. 673–674; Gumposch, pp. 454–455; C.-J. Tissot, ‘Préface du Traducteur’, in Ritter, *Histoire de la philosophie*, I (Paris, 1835), pp. xxxiv–xxxvi; E. Zeller, *Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie seit Leibniz* (Munich and Oldenburg, 1875²), p. 729; Harnack, pp. 761–765 and 964; E. Simon, *Ranke und Hegel* (Munich and Berlin, 1928), pp. 33–36 and 104–106 (on the relationship between Ritter and Ranke); G. Thier, *August Heinrich Ritter als Metaphysiker und Naturphilosoph* (Düsseldorf, 1939).

Contemporary reviews: Michelet¹, I, pp. 63–64; Zeller, pp. 40–48; ALZ, 1817, I, n. 74, cols 585–589; 1832, III, n. 216, cols 457–478; 1835, I, n. 53, cols 417–528; JALZ, 1816, II, n. 64, cols 33–38; 1838, I, n. 28–31, cols 217–243; ARNAL, 1821, III, n. 3, pp. 199–200; RGDL, 1834, III, n. 23, pp. 528–529; 1837, XII, n. 7, pp. 46–47; 1837, XV, n. 2, p. 168; 1841, XXIX, n. 13, pp. 52–54; 1845, I, n. 15, pp. 41–46; 1845, III, n. 37, pp. 417–421; NLLZ, 1822, I, n. 155, cols 1233–1239; 1827, I, n. 132, cols 1055–1056; 1829, I, n. 106, cols 841–847; 1830, I, n. 53, cols

417–422; 1833, II, n. 229–231, cols 1825–1848; HJL, 1824, I, un. 12–13, pp. 188–200; 1829, II, n. 60, pp. 979–1004; 1832, II, n. 66–69, pp. 1046–1093; GGA, 1820, I, n. 4, pp. 37–40; 1832, II, n. 89–91, pp. 881–904; 1841, II, n. 105, pp. 1042–1047; 1842, I, n. 11–12, pp. 111–120; 1844, III, n. 177, pp. 1761–1768; 1845, II, n. 76, pp. 761–767; 1850, I, n. 64–66, pp. 633–643; 1851, III, n. 168, pp. 1673–1680; 1852, III, n. 164–166, pp. 1633–1647; 1853, III, n. 162–165, pp. 1617–1641.

On Ritter's historiography: F. Picavet, *L'histoire de la philosophie. Ce qu'elle a été, ce qu'elle peut être* (Paris, 1888), p. 4; Banfi, pp. 123–124; Geldsetzer, pp. 76–77, 196–200, and 214–215; Id., *Philosophiegeschichte*, in HWPh, VII (Darmstadt, 1989), col. 915; Gadamer, *I Presocratici*, pp. 27–30; G. Scholtz, 'Zur Darstellung der griechischen Philosophie bei den Schülern Hegels und Schleiermachers', in *Philologie und Hermeneutik im 19. Jahrhundert*, pp. 289–311; Gueroult, II, pp. 489–490; M. Longo, 'La nozione di "filosofia cristiana" nella storiografia filosofica tra illuminismo e romanticismo', in *Azione e contemplazione. Scritti in onore di U. Pellegrino* (Milan, 1992), pp. 159–188; Id., 'Presagio di modernità. August Heinrich Ritter interprete di Niccolò Cusano', in *Concordia discors. Studi su Niccolò Cusano e l'umanesimo europeo offerti a Giovanni Santinello*, ed. by G. Piaia (Padova, 1993), pp. 308–330; C. Adorisio, 'The Debate between Salomon Munk and Heinrich Ritter on Medieval Jewish and Arabic History of Philosophy', *European Journal of Jewish Studies*, VI (2012), 1, pp. 169–182; *From Hegel to Windelband: Historiography of Philosophy in the 19th Century*, ed. by G. Hartung and V. Pluder (Berlin and Boston, 2015).

Chapter 2

The History of Philosophy as an ‘Organism’: The School of Schelling



Larry Steindler

Introduction

(a) *Preliminary remarks*

The theoretical foundations of the approach to the history of philosophy by Schelling’s followers were closely related to the romantic concept of history. As a result of the extensive influence of German Idealism, the importance of Romanticism as a philosophical trend has been underestimated in favour of its historical and literary aspects. Besides the philosophy of nature and that of state, the prevailing tendency has been to consider Romanticism as a general vision of the world, an attitude of the mind revolving around the sentimental sphere, whose guiding ideas were not judged to be suitable for the conceptual clarity and theoretical aspirations of Idealism, and therefore could not represent an alternative to it. As a result, a rigorous distinction was established between the “romantic school”, characterised by mainly literary expressions (the Schlegel brothers, Tieck, Novalis...) and the idealist philosophies (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel), and greater attention was paid to the reciprocal relations between philosophy and poetry.¹ But this distinction, although justified, has led to the common theoretical elements being neglected: a strong opposition between the project of transcendental philosophy, with the doctrine of science on one hand, and the mystical and romantic view of the world on the other, thus prevented the formation of due interest in the contribution made by Romanticism to the philosophical culture of the time.

This contribution is clearly evident in the Schellingians, especially concerning their understanding of history, which rests on a conception of ‘totality’ peculiar both to Idealism and to Romanticism. These common elements constitute an original theoretical connection, seldom adequately studied because of the Romantics’ unsystematic and fragmentary method of proceeding. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling,

¹ See, for example, Ueberweg, IV, p. 128.

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who was contrasted with the romantic Friedrich Schlegel by the most rigorous tradition of German Idealism, had – together with Schlegel – a great influence on the interpretation of history, the history of the spirit. A certain number of positions typical of this spiritual tendency permeated the conception and methodology of individual philosophical histories, thus showing that they were its models, much more clearly than the systematic concepts elaborated by Schelling himself who turned to different philosophical viewpoints and topics during his life.

Important exponents of the work of the Schellingians in the field of the history of philosophy were Erhard Gottlieb Steck, Moritz Posselt, Viktor Philipp Gumposch, Karl Hieronymus Windischmann, and Eduard Maximilian Röth. Their works remained incomplete or were restricted to a description of particular cultural circles, and in the most cases they stopped after their treatment of ancient and Eastern philosophy. However, they can be placed within the framework of a “history of the general histories of philosophy”, albeit only in outline. On account of their greater completeness and general character, we will only examine separately the works of Friedrich Ast, and Thaddäus Anselm Rixner.

(b) *The idea of totality*

The idea of the totality of all phenomena is supported above all by the idealist plan to relate all the spheres of culture and science to an ultimate principle. According to the Schellingian and romantic thinkers, this principle resides in the “soul” or in life itself: the two concepts are used as synonyms. The principle of life (*Das Prinzip des Lebens*) performs a significant role in Schelling and his followers, whereas Fichte and Hegel made little use of it. For the Schellingians, the soul corresponds to a manifestation of life and, conversely, animation is an essential quality imparted by the soul. Hence nature and spirit are contained simultaneously in the soul, in life. They constitute different forms of manifestation and finally resolve themselves in the unity of the principle. Pantheism, which is present throughout Idealism, is closely connected to these doctrines of the Schellingians and also characterised their Christian religious orientation.

This concept of soul-life is related to the idea of an understanding of the innermost connections in the world. The Schellingians were not interested in Kant’s theme of the limits of knowledge, but were looking for something that – according to Goethe – “keeps the world intimately united”. Windischmann spoke explicitly of searching for a secret that constitutes the motive of all enquiry, including scientific enquiry. The idea of the “one-whole” or “unitotality” (*Alleinheit*) imbuing everything, constitutes – together with the concept of soul-life – the ontological foundation of every manifestation of nature and culture, and is therefore something that is more than the mere outcome of speculation. The term “one-whole” itself originates in Spinoza’s term *“Εν καὶ Πᾶν”* which has been popularised by Lessing and Jacobi. The Schellingian’s concept of life of the spirit is certainly regarded as an essential feature of existence. In order to be able to embrace this totality of the life of the spirit, the Schellingians needed something more significant than a philosophy of feeling or of faith like that of Jacobi, for example.

In contrast to the general character attributed to these principles, the histories of philosophy written by Schelling's followers aimed concretely at collecting documents from all ages and all peoples which could give the history of the spirit a basis which was theoretically and chronologically determinable. This tendency became manifest in particular in Rixner's interpretation of the history of philosophy, which should be read as the "documentary book of metaphysics". The idea of totality and the connection between the phenomena of the life of the spirit and an ultimate principle included, therefore, specific elements, which comprised the totality of the spirit itself.

The idea of totality also manifested itself in an attempt to overcome the concept of "system" and reach that of an "organism", connected to a philosophy of life. According to the Schellingians, both nature and history constitute a living organism, whose internal dynamics are responsible for the development of inanimate nature in some of its states, as well as animate and spiritual nature. By virtue of this structure, the development of the "soul of the world" (Schelling), that is, the development of the spirit or – in Windischmann's words – the "progress of the history of the world" (*Fortgang der Weltgeschichte*), shows all the elements in their organic causal relationship. History is therefore understood as a living and natural organism.²

In this perspective, particular importance is also given to the idea of "fragmentariness", that is, the relationship between the organism and its parts or elements. The Schellingians considered the fragmentary to be in opposition to the complete system and believed it represented a means for preventing its definitive fulfilment. According to their way of thinking, a system which is complete and enclosed in itself implies the freezing of what should be an organic development; by contrast, that which is unfinished and imperfect contains "powers" still liable to emerge and is in a primitive state of development. Consequently the fragmentary, as an original and potential unity of a subsequent multiplicity, is not only opposed to the systematic but represents a primitive organic stage of it. A system which has reached its maturity constitutes the final point of a development, thus leading inexorably to the rigidifying of this development. The Schellingian historians of philosophy (Rixner, Ast, and Röth) thus spoke of differentiations which occur too systematically and even of "systems" or "branches" which have become "extinct" during an organic development. It is therefore understandable that these writers tended to prefer circular models rather than gradual or phasic models with final points.³ It is in this

²The title of this opus is very characteristic of the Schellingian program: cf. K.J.H. Windischmann, *Die Philosophie im Fortgang der Weltgeschichte* (in 4 sections, Bonn, 1827–1834). It remained unfinished with the "first part" of a work originally planned in three parts and represents a special study on "Philosophy in the Orient" – which is the subtitle of everything published; for further details see below, section (d) of this introduction.

³According to Schelling, "A system is completed when it is led back to its starting point", that is to say, it has accomplished a "revolution": F.W.J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), transl. by P. Heath, with an Introd. by M. Vater, fifth ed. (Charlottesville, VA, 2001), p. 232. Cf. *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800), in *Werke*, Vol. II, pp. 327–634, here p. 628 (Vol. III, p. 628), in the edition: *Schellings Werke, nach der Orig.-Ausg. in neuer Anordnung*, ed. by M. Schröter, 6 vols. (Munich, 1927), 6 *Ergänzungsbd.* (= Suppl.) (Munich, 1943–1959), 1 *Nachlaßbd.* (Munich, 1946). Repr. Munich, 1978 ff.; references to the original edition in 14 volumes are in brackets (Stuttgart and Augsburg, 1856–1861).

context that we can situate the special consideration given to Oriental thought (which, on the contrary, had been undervalued by Hegel) as a significant “original philosophy” (*Urphilosophie*) from which all later developments arise. In fact, Hegel also took this early epoch into account, but rigorously separated it – on a historical and philosophical plane – from the Western tradition.⁴ The Schellingians rejected this kind of separation and believed that the totality of these connections was realized within the organic whole.

This understanding of the fragmentary as the form of the living in general was reflected in the particular emphasis placed on imagination (both productive and reproductive) rather than on other psychic activities. The discursive thought of the intellect (which prevailed in the Enlightenment) can only give rise to systematic conceptions, which are in conflict with the living organism. By contrast, impulses cannot provide any knowledge and are totally excluded from the realm of the scientific. Intellect and feeling, as constituents of the human experience, must therefore be summarized into an anthropological moment which is able to connect us with the totality of the world. Since the historian of philosophy must transform creative memory into conceptual terms with the help of the imagination, the Schellingians sought after concepts expressing both the sphere of the imagination and the intellect. Schelling and Rixner spoke therefore of “intellectual intuition”⁵; Rixner also used the expression “instinct of reason” (*Vernunftinstinkt*), Windischmann “genetic comprehension” (*genetisches Begreifen*), and Röth “creative imagination” (*schöpferische Einbildungskraft*). These abilities were required of the historian of philosophy as the qualities of a genius who, according to the romantic conception of the unconscious unity of nature and spirit, is primordially connected to the writers of the past.

“Intellectual intuition” therefore signified an immediate relation with nature (that is to say, with the divinity), and in the remote times of Oriental wisdom it represented the mystical sense of life and the understanding of the world which was proper to the ancient scholars. It constituted the philosophical faculty of the imagination, which reveals even to a present-day scholar the totality of the history of philosophy, presenting it not in systematic analyses but in poetic visions.⁶ This

⁴Cf. Geldsetzer, p. 185, in particular note 114.

⁵In Schelling himself, “intellectual intuition” (*intellektuale Anschauung*) designates a means of access to the absolute which he nevertheless distinguished from “productive intuition” (*produktive Anschauung*), viewed as an elementary, unconscious function of experience or of the soul; cf. *System of Transcendental Idealism* (transl. by P. Heath), pp. 95–103 (Vol. III, pp. 456–466). However, the use of the concept of “intellectual intuition” by the Schellingian thinkers alternated between the two above definitions and referred in general to an immediate or inclusive way of grasping facts or principles.

⁶Cf. H. Heß, ‘Das romantische Bild der Philosophiegeschichte’, *Kant-Studien*, XXXI (1926), pp. 251–285, here p. 253. W. Wordsworth pointed out the difference between *fancy* as the ability to capture images already seen in contrast to more creative *imagination* which he considered to be part or a type of reason. Cf. *Poems by W. Wordsworth: Including Lyrical Ballads* (London, 1815), Vol. I, p. ix f.; E. D. Hirsch jr., *Wordsworth and Schelling. A Typological Study of Romanticism* (New Haven, 1960).

contemplation of the history of philosophy or of the world cannot be extended to each phenomenon considered separately, but corresponded rather to a sort of insight into the totality of history. Similarly, it should be clear that the preference given to the imagination made it possible to keep all forms of prescientific spiritual activity alive (mythology, belief in sagas and miracles, mystical devotion) since these cultural products were all equally important. For the Schellingians, therefore, reason loses the merely regulative function which it had been given by Kant, and is raised to a universal faculty of the soul. The aesthetic conception of the world (which is related to this faculty)⁷ is closely connected to the romantic veneration of genius and gave rise to a meticulous habitual reading of the "original philosophy" of the East or the "imaginative", "contemplative", and ultimately orientalizing Middle Ages (Ast). The aesthetic conception of the world arose from a claim to understand the entirety of the organically formed being (that is to say, the entirety of the spiritual life) by means of "intellectual intuition".

(c) *The idea of a philosophia perennis*

These reflections, which relate to the conception of totality as embracing life and soul, were completed by the idea of a *philosophia perennis*, that is to say, a dimension represented by eternal spiritual constants. The history of philosophy was given a central function here and was distinguished as being an appropriate means for understanding historical existence in general. The idea of a *philosophia perennis* can be traced back to *De perenni philosophia* (1540) by Agostino Steuco, who grounded the truth of the Christian religion in the interpretation of human knowledge as something unitary⁸; in a similar way, the Schellingians took something absolutely identical (the Absolute) as an eternal foundation of all the manifestations of the spirit, and turned to the Christian religion starting from this idea. On the basis of the absolute identity of the subjective and the objective – that is, of spirit and nature, the "conscious" and the "unconscious" – Schelling was able to base history on a universal harmony understood as a form of determinism from which the "very play of our own freedom" emerges only on a particular plane.⁹ For the Schellingians, the Identical (as soul, life or, in Rixner's words, "global organism") provided the basis for its particular phenomenal manifestations. These different ways in which the spirit manifests itself were superimposed onto the original identity and kept it concealed.

⁷Cf. *System of Transcendental Idealism*, pp. 231–232; cf. *Werke*, Vol. II, pp. 327–328 (Vol. III, pp. 627–628). Art is thus viewed as the highest form of philosophy, that is to say, of knowledge, because it joins nature and spirit in itself in the "world". On the concept of genius, see D. Jähnig, *Schelling. Die Kunst in der Philosophie* (Pfullingen, 1966–1969), I, p. 237. Cf. also H. Paetzold, *Ästhetik des deutschen Idealismus. Zur Idee ästhetischer Rationalität bei Baumgarten, Kant, Schelling, Hegel und Schopenhauer* (Wiesbaden, 1983) (on Schelling, see pp. 119–173).

⁸Cf. *Models*, I, pp. 19–22.

⁹Cf. *System of Transcendental Idealism*, p. 210: "we should recognize that everything which has come about through freedom in the course of history, was governed in this whole by law, and that all actions, although they seemed to be free, were in fact necessary, precisely in order to bring this whole into being"; cf. *Werke*, Vol. II, pp. 601–602 (Vol. III, pp. 601–602).

The irreversible process of concealment through certain “moments” of the spirit (Ast, Rixner) or, more in general, through singularity, was explained by relating it to metaphysical principles such as, for example, Idealism and Realism, or Empiricism and Rationalism. The Schellingians emphasised the “chief moments” of the history of philosophy, whose “framework” was represented by individual facts or theories which conceal these essential viewpoints but at the same time fill them with concrete contents. In Schleiermacher, the major moments are personified and become the principal representatives of the history of philosophy.¹⁰ In the case of Schelling’s followers, who identified the human manifestation of spirit and nature with genius, this idea acquired even greater importance. They did not consider the historian of philosophy as a writer with individual ideas, but rather as an exponent – on a general plane – of the history of spirit itself. It was comprehensible then, for example, that Friedrich Ast, in his *Grundriß*, presented a list of the thinkers to be examined instead of an index of contents. He considered the philosophers to be “elements” of a great spiritual organism that obeyed a “superior” organic law.¹¹

The departure from the original mystical unity of spirit and nature, experience and thought, consisted in a growing concretization towards either one direction or the other. Ultimately, all development also necessarily means decline. Schelling himself considered the history of philosophy to be a development of the various scientific perspectives that extends to the present state of research. It was here that – in Schelling’s view – decline becomes visible and the task of the historian of philosophy is to show how, step by step, the final aim has not yet been reached.¹² The knowledge of historical facts (the manifestations of the spirit), therefore, leads to an understanding of the process of decline.

According to this interpretation of the history of philosophy, the spirit presents itself again as the identity of all phenomena, which refers back to the spiritual connection between the ages of the past and those of the present. This identity also concerns the relationship between the philosophers (viewed as the authors of particular theories) and the interpretation carried out by the historian of philosophy: the universal life of the spirit exerts the same influence on the historian that was felt by the philosophers of the past; it follows that the interpretation of the historical course

¹⁰ Although he shared some points with the Schellingians, Schleiermacher should not be considered to be a historian of philosophy of the school of Schelling for methodological reasons.

¹¹ As for Schleiermacher’s relation to Ast, it is to be noted that Schleiermacher was not dependent on Ast, but both were influenced by Schlegel: cf. K. Willimczik, *Friedrich Asts Geschichtsphilosophie im Rahmen seiner Gesamtphilosophie* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1967), p. 7. See also, for example, Ast’s ‘Epochen der griechischen Philosophie’ appeared in *Europa. Eine Zeitschrift*, ed. by Friedrich Schlegel, II/2 (1805), pp. 63–81. – The famous ethnologist A. Bastian, like Ast, provides an index of the contents (in a glossary of 469 entries). His concepts are based on the totality of cultural phenomena, original philosophy, childhood of mankind etc. and must have been influenced by Schellingian thinking. Cf. *Die Welt in ihren Spiegelungen unter dem Wandel des Völkergedankens. Prolegomena zu einer Gedankenstatistik* (Berlin, 1887).

¹² Schelling, *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie. Münchener Vorlesungen*, in *Werke*, V, p. 73 (Vol. X, p. 3).

of philosophy develops the life of the spirit in the historian himself, who becomes in turn a protagonist of the history of the spirit.¹³

Since the universal laws of the spirit constitute the foundation of all particular manifestations, we cannot expect the historical development of philosophy to produce either exceptional changes or, in general, any progress. For the Schellingians, the unitary universal spirit had already been revealed in the "original philosophy", the early mythological "doctrines of the one-whole". Hence all later forms of the spirit could only finally express themselves by separating that "unity of the whole", which would result in the abandoning of the original identity, that is to say, the "innocent" and "golden epoch" of spiritual harmony between man and the world. This conservative attitude to the history of philosophy involved giving particular attention to the most ancient cultural products elaborated by man (which were interpreted in terms of "revelation") and a fundamental pessimism rejecting all faith in progress, both in an Enlightenment and a Kantian perspective.

Historical development is understood as the organic unfolding of that which is already present in embryonic form, according to a concept of "development" which was strengthened by Hegel (see below, pp. 194–196) and which was later to turn into a biological conception of development itself. But in Windischmann the concept is still neutral and signifies the continuation of the history of the world.¹⁴ The organic changes in the history of philosophy emerge here automatically, without any particular intervention, and cannot even be regarded as "progress". For the Schellingians, this way of understanding change was indicative of an erroneous form of interpretation, which did not acknowledge the fundamentally organic and natural course of development. According to this way of thinking, new empirical or historical results could not make progress an end in itself; the "true fact", observed Schelling, is "always something interior" which resides "inside the spirit" of the person who evaluates.¹⁵ For Schelling's followers, every idea of progress depended therefore on the judgement formulated by the historian of philosophy and was related to the historian's ability to penetrate the universal validity of *philosophia perennis*. In this perspective, contemporary science, together with the Christian spirit operating in it, was considered to be an epoch in which the course of history aimed exclusively at its own fulfilment, but never actually attained it. Indeed, the Schellingians believed that the premises for a comprehensive explanation of the world and for a knowledge of history lay solely in *philosophia perennis* and the idea of totality in general.

But the acknowledgement of the awareness of contemporaneity fostered by "representations" (according to the Schlegel brothers) and by the philosophy of identity (Schelling) was based on a basically positive evaluation of contemporary

¹³ Cf. Geldsetzer, p. 201. This also recalls Augustine of Hippo's famous sentence in *De vera religione*, 72: "Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi. In interiore homine habitat veritas".

¹⁴ Cf. Braun, pp. 272–273, on the anti-Enlightenment concept of "continuation" (*Fortgang*) or "progression" (*Fortrückung*) which was already present in Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Riga and Leipzig, 1784–1791).

¹⁵ Schelling, *Darstellung des philosophischen Empirismus*, in *Werke*, V, p. 273 (Vol. X, p. 227).

philosophy. Thanks to the awareness of modernity, the idea of decline was understood as the result of a knowledge permeating even the most general structures of the history of the spirit, although in a way which was metaphysically abstract rather than concretely philosophical or cultural. Hence the historian of philosophy, as an exponent of the history of the spirit, was a spokesman of this hermeneutic turning point, but only as a witness to it. Romanticism, that is to say, the trend of thought centred around Schelling, did not constitute an original or new viewpoint, but rather a metaphysically oriented, profound, and inclusive perception of the world, which could be in harmony with the contemporary transition from Idealism and Realism to “Idealrealism” and which, at the same time, considered this transition to be a permanent influence reflecting the life of the spirit. With reference to the meaning given to mythology in contemporaneity, Schelling spoke of “an age that perceives itself and its task correctly, although it does not always have a clear knowledge of it”.¹⁶

According to the Schellingians, the fundamental ideas of humanity during the ages of “Orientalism” and Antiquity consisted of a universal harmony with nature, with oneself, and with the metaphysical principles of Idealism and Realism, whereas – in their view – during the modern and contemporary ages, man had only developed an awareness of an inner division. From this – according to August Wilhelm Schlegel, but also according to the Schellingian historians of philosophy – it follows that a reconciliation of the ideal and the real, the sensible and the abstract, the natural and the cultural is pursued with an awareness that it will always be impossible to attain the perfection of the “original philosophies” of humanity.

According to the romantics, the specific consciousness of modernity consisted above all in a mystical leaning towards the past, towards a harmony which no longer exists but becomes the object of the history of philosophy. Because of this return to the spiritual roots of the spirit of the time and of the “history of humanity”, in the Schellingians the history of philosophy became essential for an understanding of the present in the light of *philosophia perennis*. This view of the history of philosophy went beyond the aim of penetrating and theoretically vitalizing the historical spirit, as it was for Schleiermacher’s disciples. Going beyond the Hegelian conception of the history of the spirit as the result of historical development and also an interpretation of the present state of philosophical research, the Schellingians aimed at an ontology of identification between past spirit and contemporary spirit.

(d) *Sectoral contributions to the history of philosophy*

It is difficult to define the various representatives of the school of Schelling, both because of the general nature of their guiding ideas and the fact that their thought is interwoven with the ideal world of the romantics, but also because of the obscurity of their proposals. A writer can be said to belong to the Schellingian school if he shares common theoretical and methodological premises, such as the ideas of organism, decline, stratification, revelation, continuity, totality, and the use of

¹⁶ Schelling, *Philosophie der Mythologie*, Zweites Buch, in *Werke*, Suppl. V, p. 7 (Vol. XII, p. 141).

hermeneutics, the role of the aesthetic perspective, an adherence to Catholicism, and an interest in mythology and the philosophy of the East.

Ast and Rixner were undoubtedly the chief representatives of this school. As for Schelling himself, it is to be noted that he only applied his theoretical principles to the history of philosophy in the Munich lectures entitled *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* of 1827.¹⁷ As he declared in the 'Foreword', he wished to contribute to a deeper understanding of contemporary philosophy through a "retrospective survey of the previous systems" (*Werke*, V, p. 73), thus debating – in separate chapters – with Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Wolff, Kant, Fichte, with his own philosophy of nature, and with Jacobi. According to Schelling, the rupture which Descartes made to the philosophical tradition led to a merely subjective certainty of the Self, in opposition to the search for the principle which in Thales' thought was placed in relation to the whole of nature (pp. 74–75). The Cartesian limitation of the theory of knowledge to the subjective sphere is judged negatively, as if it were the childish regression to a naive form of science placed on a lower level. In Schelling's view, subjectivistic philosophy refuses to acknowledge the totality of spirit and nature, just as scepticism rejects the unity of knowing and being. In the light of the idea of totality and continuity, Thales proved to be much closer to the original and metaphysical unity of the whole than any later thinker, who can represent only a positive or negative moment in an eternal unity of being and spirit. Schelling's only concern here was to discern the beginning of the life of the spirit in an original philosophy, in relation to which all later theories were nothing other than more or less effective

¹⁷ *Werke*, V, pp. 71–270 (English transl. by A. Bowie: *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1994, pp. xi–195). Neither these lectures nor other writings by Schelling contain any explicit theory of the history of philosophy. As for the Munich lectures, Heß observes: "The purpose of the lectures which were published posthumously on the history of modern philosophy is not historical strictly speaking but rather practical and polemical, just as in the case of the lectures on the history of philosophy held by Schleiermacher, which were attacked by Niehbur precisely for this reason" (Heß, 'Das romantische Bild', p. 274). The fact that for Schelling nothing is external and nothing lies entirely outside the history of philosophy has been demonstrated by Giuseppe Riconda (*Schelling storico della filosofia (1794–1820)*, Milan, 1990; see also above, Ch. 2/Intr., note 13). Schelling's concept of the history of philosophy is here understood in a metaphysical sense, as a relationship of the absolute to the world, that is to say, as revelation. Schelling also formulated his ideas on the history of philosophy in the following works: 'Welche Fortschritte hat die Metaphysik seit Leibniz' und Wolffs Zeiten gemacht? Rezension der Preisschriften der Berliner Akademie. Aus der allgemeinen Übersicht der neuesten philosophischen Literatur', *Philosophisches Journal*, ed. by J.G. Fichte and F.I. Niethammer, VI–VII (1797–1798), also contained in *Werke*, I, pp. 377–385 (I, pp. 453–461); in this regard, see Geldsetzer, pp. 40–41, Braun, pp. 289; Heß, 'Das romantische Bild', pp. 274–275. We can also mention several pages belonging to the "positive" phase of Schelling's thought, for example, in the philosophy of mythology and revelation and in Schelling's *Vorrede* to V. Cousin, *Über französische und deutsche Philosophie*, transl. by H. Becker (Stuttgart-Tübingen, 1834), also contained in *Werke*, Suppl. IV, pp. 445–468, in particular pp. 466–468 (Vol. X, pp. 222–224); cf. I.H. Fichte, *Über die Bedingungen des speculativen Theismus; in einer Beurtheilung der Vorrede Schellings zu dem Werk von Cousin über französische und deutsche Philosophie* (Elberfeld, 1835).

reminiscences.¹⁸ He therefore found in Spinozism a “system which is better, more beautiful, more satisfactory” than Cartesianism (p. 103), and suggested that its explanation of the history of philosophy was a natural sequence of philosophical trends which follow cyclic and epicyclic movements occurring on a homogeneous basis.¹⁹ The idea of continuity involved here is accompanied by the idea of decline; hence, on one hand, he stressed the spiritual unity of Spinoza and Leibniz (pp. 118–123) and, on the other hand, he considered Leibniz’s philosophy to be a “languishing Spinozism” (*verkümmelter Spinozismus*: p. 124).²⁰

Schelling understood Kant’s philosophy in a similar way. He was not interested in the results obtained by Kant’s theory, but in its uninterrupted influence, which was a sort of creative power, an “impetus” (*Trieb*) towards the development of the life of the spirit.²¹ With Kant “the vital point of philosophy has been finally attained, and this point, like the seed of a being that has already been planted, or like the fundamental idea of a great drama, does not permit any rest until the development has been completed” (p. 144, note). It is philosophy itself which is somehow seized by a “necessary and involuntary process”, according to an image which, besides the function performed by Kant, is once again proof of Schelling’s concept of *philosophia perennis* and the supraindividual totality.²² This is the direction followed by Schelling’s arguments at the end of his *Vorlesungen*, which also refer to the developments of the philosophy of nature he had promoted: “[...] it is the task of us Germans, who on the basis of the very existence of the Philosophy of nature, have emerged from the gloomy alternative between an unsubstantiated metaphysics – which is justly mocked at – devoid of any foundation and a sterile and dry psychology, it is our task, I say, to build the system which we should hope to undertake and

¹⁸ On the conception of “original philosophy” (*Urphilosophie*), see the critical observations by Arnold Ruge concerning Schelling’s series of lectures entitled *Über die Bedeutung der Mythologie*: “He [Schelling] was focused in this issue [...] already in 1821, to the great astonishment [...] of his audience, shifting wisdom gradually further back in time and going back to the original people.” (A. Ruge, *Aus früherer Zeit*, Vol. II (Berlin, 1862), p. 83; also in *Schelling im Spiegel seiner Zeitgenossen*, ed. by X. Tilliette (Turin, 1974), p. 269).

¹⁹ On the relationship between Schelling and Descartes, cf. Riconda, *Schelling storico della filosofia*, p. 195: “If Descartes knows duality without unity, Spinoza knows unity without duality”.

²⁰ The importance of Spinozism in Schelling’s eyes has been shown by H. Han-Ding, *Spinoza und die deutsche Philosophie. Eine Untersuchung zur metaphysischen Wirkungsgeschichte des Spinozismus in Deutschland* (Aalen, 1989); in particular on Schelling, see pp. 132–153.

²¹ For Schelling, organic development is never concluded and is characterised by constantly new crises, moments, or turning points. As he wrote of Cousin, the “historian of philosophy and autonomous philosopher”: “He felt undisputedly that German philosophy is still going through a process whose real crisis, which might explain it, is still imminent” (Schelling, ‘Vorrede’ to: Cousin, *Über französische und deutsche Philosophie*, in *Werke*, Suppl. IV, pp. 467–468 [Vol. X, pp. 223–224]).

²² *Werke*, V, p. 144, note: “In such a succession, the particular individual, in his simple singularity and particularity, is not important; this individual element is only the tribute he pays to his epoch, he is merely the shell and the skin which is left behind in the course of subsequent development, or rather is only what remains, pertaining to it, of the earth and the soil on which it developed. Hence we must consider Kant similarly”. On the origin of this fragment, which was reprinted as a note to the *Vorlesungen*, cf. L. Pareyson, *Schellingiana rariora* (Turin, 1977), pp. 571–572.

conclude, that positive system whose principle, precisely on account of this absolute positivity, cannot be knowable *a priori* but only *a posteriori*; it is our task, I insist, to fulfil it to the point where it will coincide with that empiricism [of the French and English philosophers] – in equal proportion extended and purified” (p. 270). He thus envisaged the self-legislation of the organic development of the spirit: the individual philosopher is certainly an active agent, but ultimately he does not determine the whole course of the history of the spirit autonomously. Hence the need to complete – through the history of philosophy – the organic development of the self-organization of the main metaphysical moments of the spiritual element as different forms of manifestation of a single spirit.²³

This hermeneutic vision included a complete series of theoretical, that is to say, methodological points of view, which induced Schelling to express his rare judgments on the development of modern philosophy. Indeed, his lectures on the history of philosophy did not present the paradigmatic character we might expect from a school bearing his name. Schelling's influence manifested itself above all in the theoretical field, starting from the period in which his interest in the philosophy of identity appeared. These metaphysical bases, which provided Schelling's followers with the heuristic impulses behind their historiographical dissertations, were already available in the *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800), which could be used more completely than what happened subsequently with his lectures on the history of philosophy (1827).

A writer who showed the influence of Schelling astonishingly early was the jurist Erhard Gottlieb Steck, who died in 1823 and whose year and place of birth are unknown. His *Die Geschichte der Philosophie. Erster Teil. Die Weltweisheit der Alten* (Riga, 1805) remained unfinished. After rejecting the “pragmatic” view of the *a priori* historiography practised by the Kantians, Steck wished to understand reality as an organ of the universal spirit and, like the Schellingians, distinguished between the transient “outer appearance” (*Außenseite*) of the separate systems and their internal organism which is eternally active (*Die Geschichte der Philosophie*, pp. 7–9). For Steck, the concept of totality in the understanding of philosophy and the history of the world – which are elements of universal history integrated with one another – was closely related to the idea of revelation: history as a product of the imagination, that is to say, as “the image of the eternal in time” (*das Eingebildete des Ewigen in der Zeit*) (p. 1). Traces of the original life with God, from which reason was to depart subsequently, can be found only in the mythologies of the remotest ages (p. 7). The history of philosophy is therefore only possible after an irreversible departure from the immediate knowledge of the Absolute (p. 11). A few

²³ Unlike Schelling, Schleiermacher's followers believed that the exercise of hermeneutics did not embrace the whole of the existence and history of the universal (or absolute) spirit, but, more strictly, the history of its manifestations, which are always individual and concrete; hence the historian of philosophy had the task of studying the individual figures of philosophers with the help of a philologically oriented textual hermeneutics. See above, pp. 26–27, on the distinction established by Schleiermacher, with reference to Schelling and F. Schlegel, between a “superior” philology and an “inferior” philology.

decades later Eduard Röth was to restore this concept, again incorporating it into the idea of a close relationship between empirical knowledge and a global mythological explanation. This process of decline cannot certainly be stopped, but it can be at least understood. To this end, Steck prefaced his account of Greek philosophy with a “deduction of the history of philosophy in the spirit of the most recent Idealism” (pp. 15–68), which was dominated by the Fichtean theory of spiritual action, as well as the Schellingian ideas of identity, polarity, and circularity. Nevertheless, Steck criticised Fichte’s “reflective method”, which he judged to be limited, and preferred his own “idealistic perspective” (*idealistische Ansicht*) as being more appropriate to express “truth” (pp. 12–13). Because of his conception of life, tending – just like that of Fichte – towards the primacy of action, Steck’s thought cannot strictly be included in the Schellingian tendency, even if Schelling’s influence – albeit not expressly – clearly manifests itself.²⁴

In the same way, it is not possible to definitively classify a writer like Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832) as a Schellingian. On one hand, he declared himself to be an independent follower of Kant, preferring Fichte to Schelling; on the other, in his historiographical reflections he made use of Schellingian concepts, from the ideas of totality, harmony, and organism to cyclic periodisation and the search – understood in an anti-Kantian sense – for the Eastern origins of Greek philosophy.²⁵ Like other Schellingians, Krause placed the beginning of the history of the spirit, that is to say, the development of the “scientific spirit” (*Gesch. d. neueren phil. Syst.*, p. 6), in a mythological epoch marked by presentiment, and, with reference to his “doctrine of the original being” (*Urwesenlehre*), spoke of epochmaking “original thinkers” (*Urdenker*). As for the remotest Greek philosophy, he supposed that its spiritual source lay in the East.

Krause relativized the Kantian idea of progress (interpreted as “redemption”) and made it consist in man’s progressive return to his lost innocence, denying that

²⁴ Steck’s “*Deduktion*” is similar in style to Friedrich Schlegel’s fragmentary approach and is related to the custom of quoting and paraphrasing the Greek classics, viewing them – as Schelling did – as a “documentary” basis on which the ensuing poetical and creative account can be based. Braun classified this history of poetry, mythology, and speculation as an original “genre” or a particular kind of history of philosophy (Braun, pp. 305–306).

²⁵ Cf. K.Ch.F. Krause, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by P. Hohlfeld and A. Wünsche (Leipzig, 1887), which reproduces the section on the history of philosophy of the *Vorlesungen über die Grundwahrheiten der Wissenschaft* (Göttingen, 1829); *Abriss der Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie, aus dem handschriftlichen Nachlasse des Verfassers*, ed. by P. Hohlfeld and A. Wünsche (Leipzig, 1893); see also *Zur Geschichte der neueren philosophischen Systeme, aus dem handschriftlichen Nachlasse des Verfassers*, ed. by P. Hohlfeld and A. Wünsche (Leipzig, 1889) (as concerns Krause’s Kantianism, see in particular the ‘Vorrede’ written by the editor [p. viii]; on his self-evaluation as an original thinker, see ‘Einleitung’ [p. 3]; on Schelling’s “coarse” elements of thought and aversion to mathematics, see pp. 312–313). On Krause’s influence on Tiberghien see below, pp. 366–371.

truth can ever be attained in its pure form.²⁶ He therefore adopted the idea of decline, although less rigorously than other Schellingians, and appeared to be closer to the conception elaborated by the Kantians, whereby Kant's system is the measure of the history of philosophy as a whole. Moreover, he established a difference between progress with the object of comprehending the history of science as an "individual impulse", and the "whole vital impulse of humanity", which, he believed, dominated all other moments punctuating development. The task of philosophy, and hence of the history of philosophy, consisted in providing an "organic knowledge of all that is knowable, according to all the sources of learning", albeit "excluding the individual historical dimension as such" (p. 5.). This exclusion was of an anti-Schellingian nature, that is, it went against the tendency to appreciate philological documentation, and was consistent with the Kantian inclination to appreciate intellectual speculation, removing the constituents of personal singularity as being inessential to interpreting the history of philosophy.

On the basis of Krause's evaluation of the history of philosophy and his theoretical independence, which also manifested itself in his terminology and which became influential in Spain in the school of "Krausianism", Krause can only be partially considered to be one of the Schellingians. His distance from Schelling, which was also due to personal reasons (difficulties he encountered in obtaining a university chair),²⁷ did not arouse in him any particular interest in the history of philosophy, which he had already dealt with in the 1820s, but only came to light in a later posthumous edition.

Moritz Posselt (1801–1875) represents another example of the influence Schelling exercised on historiographical theory and practice. Posselt was a teacher of philosophy in Dorpat and he wrote a *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, of which only the first part was published (Dorpat, 1839). Despite his dependence on Jakob Friedrich Fries and his conception of the history of philosophy, Posselt showed the influence of Schelling in several areas. He shared Fries's rejection of Hegel's dialectic treatment of history (p. 8) and spoke of the "dialectic" of individual thinkers only in a biographical sense (pp. 20–21). Like Fries, he maintained the existence of a close connection between the concept of philosophy and the political, cultural, and religious ideas of his time (p. 19). Posselt's criticism of the dialectic method was related to theoretical and scientific considerations of lesser intensity than in Fries: he takes again a Schellingian aversion to the "rigid, dead mechanism

²⁶ Cf. Krause, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, pp. 5 and 27–30; on the idea of cycle and organism in Krause, cf. Braun, pp. 306–308. Indeed, with reference to periodicity, Krause used expressions similar to those used by Röth, who assumed the existence of "circles of ideas" (*Ideenkreise*): Krause spoke of "circles of images" (*Bildkreise*), as a geographical metaphor of historical, cultural, and spiritual development.

²⁷ Cf. *Schelling im Spiegel seiner Zeitgenossen*, p. 330 (Krause's letter of 1830 with regard to his university chair); p. 335 (Krause criticised Schelling's "positive" conception of history). Cf. also *Schelling im Spiegel seiner Zeitgenossen*, *Ergänzungsband: Melchior Meyer über Schelling*, ed. by X. Tilliette (Turin, 1981), p. 86 (regarding Krause's essay 'Über den Einfluß der Schellingischen Philosophie auf die Beförderung der Religiosität', *Königsberger Archiv für Philosophie, Theologie, Sprachkunde und Geschichte*, I (1812), pp. 261–275).

of the dialectic movement involving the concept" (p. 8). On the basis of long-term questions, like the Schellingians, Posselt started from *philosophia perennis*, which should not allow the object of history to be defined as something which has passed away – and which corresponds to Schelling's idea of stratification – but as a foundation on which the subsequent elaboration of theories can be based (pp. 13–14). The different moments of philosophy reveal themselves as particular ideas or systems, thus constituting a history of the life of our spirit, which should progress while remaining in an eternal youth (pp. 16–17) and should become manifest in the idea of humanity as a whole (p. 5). In this case, the history of the spirit as an ideal organism embodies freedom, in opposition to the necessity of exterior nature (pp. 5 and 9).

Like the Schellingians, Posselt directed his criticism at Reinhold, Tennemann, Tiedemann, and in particular Fries because they despised the philosophy of the East as the "original history" of the spirit. We do not know, however, whether Posselt also maintained the hypothesis of a history considered as the decline of philosophy. After elaborating his detailed treatment of the original history of Eastern thinkers and the poetical and theological beginnings of Greek philosophy, which he considered to be "immensely significant", he had no time left to conclude his account of Greek thought, which stops with the Sophists, before Socrates. Like Fries, Posselt also formulated a series of observations concerning methodology and the theory of the history of philosophy; these observations also contained a classification of categories of possible metaphysical and theoretical points of view concerning both the development of the history of philosophy itself and the theoretical bases of the writing of this history of philosophy.

Also worth mentioning for his pure Schellingian style is the secondary school teacher, librarian, and historian of literature Victor Philipp Gumposch (1817–1853). Gumposch was the author of the fourth volume (the supplement) of Rixner's *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Sulzbach, 1850). In the preface, he declared that he had collected "fragments", that is to say, notes of the lectures held by Schelling in Munich, which he attended, perhaps together with Rixner (p. v). Like Posselt, Gumposch was influenced by the contemporary debate on the method of the history of philosophy and, in carrying out a typological survey of the points of view elaborated by the historians, he took into consideration Eduard Zeller's essay *Die Geschichte der alten Philosophie in den letztverflossenen 50 Jahren*.²⁸ Like Rixner and then Röth, Gumposch represented the historical and philological wing of the Schellingian school; in his case, speculative hermeneutics was less important, while it prevailed in Ast, Windischmann, Steck, and Posselt. Gumposch devoted three chapters of his supplement to the philosophy of the East and its sources. He reproached his colleagues Friedrich Schlegel and Windischmann not so much for their theology in their histories of philosophy, as for the religious syncretism produced by the imagination: a syncretism arising from prejudice and ending in dilettantism (p. 5). However, in defining philosophy as a scientific struggle for the

²⁸ Cf. Zeller, pp. 1–85.

eternal, that is to say for the pure thoughts which underlie all its spiritual phenomena (p. 8), Gumposch became a supporter of the Schellingian theory of revelation.

This is shown by his major work *Die philosophische Literatur der Deutschen von 1400 bis auf unsere Tage* (Regensburg, 1851), which came out in 1850 (cf. 'Vorwort', p. VIII). The huge amount of biographical and bibliographical material collected here shows that the theory of the revelation of the philosophical spirit is not indefinite and nebulous but concretely related to facts and data. Other indications which allow us to place Gumposch among the Schellingians are the importance he gave to textual witnesses in elaborating a history of philosophy, his assumption that the Reformation had negative and not only positive influences on the evolution of philosophy, and the conviction that "every philosophy is real experience" (p. 4). Gumposch, who had attended Schelling's lectures and was a meticulous historian of philosophy, should certainly be considered as one of the Schellingians, although for thematic reasons his work does not entitle him to be classified among the major exponents of the movement.

A more outstanding representative of the school of Schelling is Karl Joseph Hieronymus Windischmann (1775–1839), even though his thought also contains some elements of Hegelianism. He was active in the fields of medicine and philosophy as well as the philosophy of nature and historiography, and his work was always accompanied by a profound religiosity. Windischmann examined the history of philosophy from the viewpoint of a Catholic and a physician: these perspectives led him to accept a truth which is eternal, but from which – in his view – man has pathologically departed in the course of the history of the spirit. Windischmann adopted the Schellingian contrasts between the *philosophia perennis* and the historical decline of the spirit as the interpretative basis for his major work on the history of philosophy, which consists of almost two thousand pages: *Die Philosophie im Fortgang der Weltgeschichte, I: Die Grundlagen der Philosophie im Morgenland* (Bonn, 1827–1834), 4 parts in 1 volume.²⁹ Of the four sections which had been planned, only the first, which is devoted exclusively to the philosophy of China and India, was actually printed. In the *Einleitung*, Windischmann followed a Hegelian framework and tried above all to illustrate the evolutionary history of consciousness, from the early stage of inner certainty to the height and clarity of the philosophical stage, in which law and science are expressed institutionally (I. Abt., 1827, pp. I–LI). In this phase of the "justifying science" (*rechtfertigenden Wissenschaft*: p. xxix), he believed, it was possible to formulate a "criticism of error", whose fundamental characteristics would manifest themselves historically in the different forms of individuation, that is to say, in the different ways of departing from the original truth. These deviations become visible outwardly in the critical moments of the historical and spiritual course of the illness (*Krankheit*). The spirit is pulled

²⁹ This edition presents a few typographical variants (for example, the title page of volume I is dated 1828), which are also due to the additions made by Windischmann during printing.

alternately between subjectivism and objectivism, rationalism and irrationalism, movement and rest, unity and rupture.

In order to express the “origin of the intelligible world” adequately (p. v) we do not need the individual opinion of a historian of philosophy, but the history of philosophy in its entirety. Just like the philosopher who goes in search of truth, so the historian of philosophy should perceive the facts of the history of the spirit with the simplicity of a child, so as to discover in the most authentic way the evidence of the historical formation of ideas on the basis of their truthfulness. On the part of the scholar, this implies an insight into the progressive process of the regeneration of philosophical development which takes place within the pathological course of development as well as a reflection on the roots of the history of humanity: the speculative world of China and India. For Windischmann, therefore, the history of philosophy means a revelation of *philosophia perennis*, that is, of the underlying spiritual paths of the development of philosophy, which, through a series of crises, lead to the science of reason, even though this aim is never actually reached. According to Windischmann’s “conservatism”, man’s original unity with the divine truth was already lost in the act of historical human existence. Hence, he believed, the aspiration to truth is deeply rooted in man and is endangered by irrationalistic positions such as scepticism, heretical tendencies, atheism, and all sorts of disharmonies. Contemporary philosophy, however, comes close to the pinnacle of the true science of reason, which Windischmann identifies in the metaphysical aspirations of the idealists, and those of Schelling and Hegel in particular.

On a historiographical plane, this search for principles also manifested itself in Windischmann’s making the most important texts of Indian and Chinese classical philosophy available to the reader. The length of his work is largely determined by the texts he incorporated into it, going far beyond the Schellingian method of fixing a “document” (*Urkunde*), and arriving at Schopenhauer’s plan of a history of philosophy as a “chrestomathy”. Hence Windischmann’s merits as a translator of the philosophical texts of the East into German – and here we can note that his son Friedrich translated texts from Sanskrit – and his collaboration with Franz Bopp, the founder of Indo-European linguistics.³⁰

Eduard Maximilian Röth (1807–1858), a late representative of the movement, developed other Schellingian themes and distinguished himself for his studies as an orientalist even more conspicuously than the physician Windischmann. From 1850 Röth taught philosophy and Sanskrit and dealt above all with the question of the beginnings of the spiritual history of the West. His studies on Egyptian hieroglyphs, which he carried out in Paris between 1836 and 1840, are at the basis of his major work, *Geschichte unserer abendländischen Philosophie. Entwicklungsgeschichte unserer spekulativen, sowohl philosophischen als religiösen Ideen von ihren ersten*

³⁰ Cf. F. Bopp, *Über das Conjugationssystem der Sanskritsprache*, edited by Windischmann (Frankfurt a.M., 1816; repr. Hildesheim, 1975).

Anfängen bis auf die Gegenwart (Mannheim, 1846–1858), 3 tomes in 2 volumes (2nd ed., Mannheim, 1862).³¹

For Röth, all research is determined by the empirical sphere it refers to (“perception”, that is, *Wahrnehmung*, and “observation”, that is, *Beobachtung*) as well as by a theory, that is to say, a “vision of the world” (*Weltanschauung*) (ed. 1862, I, ‘Einleitung’, p. 4). Since he believed that human knowledge always depends on the phenomenal world and is therefore incomplete, these gaps in empirical knowledge are filled – in science – by speculation and hypothesis (p. 8).

In the course of the history of science, an increase in empirical knowledge corresponds to a decrease in the “extent of the pure knowledge of thought”, that is to say, in speculation. From the point of view of the “*Geistesgeschichte*”, Röth also came to a conclusion based on an inverse proposition: the closer we are to the beginnings of this history, the more it presents premonitions and speculation, and the less empirical knowledge there is. In his view, the first of humanity’s systems of thought consisted exclusively in “audacious assumptions and unprovable opinions” (p. 15). This is a theory that contains Schellingian ideas. Röth’s pessimistic conception of progress is related above all to his negative view of the subsequent course of the history of philosophy, and he mentions here “spiritual crises” (p. 16) and, based on the idea of an organism, rejects the idea of a system in considering the history of philosophy. The function of the historian of philosophy consists in recognising the guiding idea of philosophical theories, which can be partly hidden or secret (p. 19). What underlies his task is the Schellingians’ idea of revelation, which Röth however does not mention explicitly. His model for interpreting the history of the spirit is, rather, the perpetual opposition between speculation and empirics, between a general vision of the world (like the religious vision, for example) and specific facts.

For Röth, elements common to Eastern and Western cultural circles are evidence of the historical and spiritual connection between Egypt and Greece, and these are confirmed by ancient accounts of the travels made by Thales and Pythagoras through Egypt and Persia (p. 23). The original unity of religion and philosophy is at the basis of the mythologies, not only as fantastic stories concerning the gods, but also on account of their speculative core; and, conversely, the more mature philosophical speculation elaborated later on can be traced back to ancient mythical representations. In Röth’s view, the mythological part of religions merely represents their “shell”, which veils their metaphysical contents (p. 223). For Röth and the other Schellingians, it was necessary to remove these shells from the metaphysical foundations of the different “circles of ideas” (*Ideenkreise*) to arrive at a correct account of the history of philosophy. The aim of demonstrating the spiritual dependence of Greek culture on that of Egypt induced Röth to look for the convergences and the concordant religious and cosmological elements. The similarity in the name and function of the Egyptian and Greek divinities helped him reach an understanding and a rationalisation of ancient mythology. Pythagoras played an important role in

³¹ The two volumes containing the text are followed by a volume with the philological commentary. These ‘Notes’ have their own title page, although they are still defined as a “second volume”.

this theory of the Persian and Egyptian origin of Greek philosophy, and hence his thought is explained at length in Röth's work. Plato is also of considerable importance, but only in relation to the doctrine of numbers, which derived from the Pythagoreans. As for Aristotle, nothing remains of him but a mere memory. This is enough to show the particularity of Röth's work and is a significant example of the kind of activity carried out by the Schellingians. This path, which followed a methodology which was less exact but nevertheless embraced all the epochs of philosophy, had already been followed a few decades earlier by Ast and Rixner, whose writings deserve to be analysed here in greater depth.

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3.1 Georg Anton Friedrich Ast (1778–1841)

Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie *Hauptmomente der Geschichte der Philosophie*

3.1.1 Friedrich Ast, one of the most faithful followers of Schelling, was born in Gotha on 29th December, 1778, the son of a subordinate of the court marshal Sylvius Friedrich Ludwig von Frankenberg. He attended a secondary school in his home town, where Adolf Heinrich Friedrich Schlichtegroll had aroused his interest in the classical world. In 1798 the young Ast began his studies in theology, philology, and philosophy at the University of Jena, where he attended courses held by Friedrich Schlegel, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Schelling. His writings *De Platonis Phaedro* (Jena, 1801) and *Prima artis pulchri lineamenta* (Jena, 1802) earned him respectively a doctorate and qualified him to become a university teacher of philology and philosophy.

His first lessons dealt with aesthetics and the history of philosophy. In 1805 he was appointed to the chair of aesthetics at the University of Landshut, and in 1807 to that of universal history. In 1826 Ast moved to Munich due to the transfer of the university, and in the previous year he had become a member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences. When he was in Landshut Ast had joined a circle of romantics, together with Johann Michael Sailer, a Schellingian with mystical tendencies, and Friedrich Karl von Savigny, the founder of the "historical school" in the philosophy of law.

Ast was reputed to be a brilliant and inspiring teacher, although he did not find any particular school in the field of philology. His greatest merits lay in the study of Plato and – for philosophy – in the field of hermeneutics and the philosophy of history, where Schelling's influence is particularly evident. There is some uncertainty as to the date of his death: according to the information provided by the scholars of philosophy, he died on 31st October 1841 in Munich, while the *Neue deutsche Biographie* records the date as the 30th December of the same year.

3.1.2 Thanks to his activity as a philologist and, consequently, as a translator, Ast's production also embraced the literary field. By the time of his university studies he had already published a commentary on Propertius entitled *Observationes in Propertii Carmina et in Elegiam ad Liviam Augustam* (Gotha, 1799). Shortly later, together with Georg Gottlieb Güldenapfel, Ast translated a novel by Achilles Tatius: *Leukippe, ein Roman aus dem Griechischen* (Leipzig, 1802), followed by *Krösus, ein Trauerspiel* (Leipzig, 1804), written alone. In the same year his translation of Sophocles' tragedies was published in Leipzig. In the field of classical philology we can mention Ast's editions of Aeschylus' *Prometheus*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, Euripides' *Medea* (Landshut, 1810), and an *Anthologia latina poetica* (Munich, 1811), as well as Theophrastus' *Characteres in usum lectionum* (Leipzig, 1815).

Ast's gained philological merit for his parallel Greek and Latin edition of Plato's writings: *Opera* (Lipsiae, 1819–1832, 11 vols, of which volumes X and XI contain the *Annotationes in Platonis Opera*). As mentioned above, he had written a commentary on *Phaedrus* long before this. He subsequently published the *Animadversiones in Platonis Leges et Epinomida* (Leipzig, 1814), and then the German *Platon's Leben und Schriften. Ein Versuch, im Leben wie in den Schriften des Platon das Wahre und Ächte vom Erdichteten und Untergeschobenen zu scheiden, und die Zeitfolge der ächten Gespräche zu bestimmen* (Leipzig, 1816; repr. Frankfurt a.M., 1976). Of considerable importance still today is his *Lexikon Platonicum sive vocum platoniarum index* (3 vols, Leipzig, 1835–1838; repr. Berlin, 1908; Bonn, 1956; New York, 1969), which also served as a supplement (vols XII–XIV) to his edition of Plato. The theoretical bases of his remarkable activity as an editor, translator, and interpreter were developed in his *Grundlinien der Grammatik, Hermeneutik und Kritik* (Landshut, 1808, repr. Frankfurt a.M., 1979).

Ast's philosophical production was closely related to his hermeneutics. His main interests were aesthetics and the history of philosophy. For this reason he wrote the *System der Kunstlehre oder Lehr- und Handbuch der Aesthetik* (Leipzig, 1805) and later the *Grundlinien der Aesthetik* (Landshut, 1813). Moreover, he published the journal *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Kunst* (I–II, Landshut, 1808–1809; III, Munich, 1810) and wrote at the same time the *Grundlinien der Philosophie* (Landshut, 1807; second expanded edition, 1809).

Ast's aim to grasp the spirit of each epoch was clear in the subject of his inaugural lecture: *Über den Geist des Alterthums und dessen Bedeutung für unser Zeitalter* (Landshut, 1805). His *Entwurf der Universalgeschichte*, consisting of two parts (part I, Landshut, 1808; second edition, revised and expanded, parts I and II, 1810) provided a further indication of his will to comprehend the spiritual bases of each

epoch as thoroughly as possible, because universal history subordinates the history of philosophy. In his *Grundlinien der Grammatik, Hermeneutik und Kritik*, Ast declared that "only a philologist who is philosophically experienced" is capable of "rising from the earthly ground of grammatical and historical interpretation to the ethereal height of explanation and spiritual, unconditioned evaluation" (p. 212). The presentation of the history of philosophy implies therefore both a historical and a spiritual interpretation; this was carried out above all in his *Grundriß einer Geschichte der Philosophie* (Landshut, 1807, pp. xvi-491) which was expanded and republished in 1825 under a slightly different title. Finally there followed a shorter treatise: *Hauptmomente der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Munich, 1829, pp. iv-75). In addition to these major works, Ast wrote several articles and reviews.

3.1.3 Friedrich Ast's conception of philosophy and the history of philosophy arose from a position strongly influenced by his interest in hermeneutics, which aimed at understanding and interpreting the world in its essence together with science which studies this world. His pursued his search for a universally valid "law of formation" (*Bildungsgesetz*) in relation to the unity of every spiritual phenomenon and progressed in a constructive direction, without avoiding complex metaphysical distinctions, and he did this by applying a number of Schellingian concepts, such as "polarity", "organism", and "revelation". Ast's contribution to the theory of the history of philosophy was to transpose Schellingian ideas to the historical perspective, not only with in its the chronological structure but also in its rigorous construction.

In the preface to the *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie* (ed. 1825), Ast asserted the organic formation of philosophical systems, which forms the basis for the scientific consideration of philosophy. He believed that a more deeply underlying law of formation stood at the basis of this, which immediately possesses the idea of being. Indeed, together with this idea we have the three moments of the real, the ideal, and the real-ideal and, correspondingly, being itself, activity, and life. In this context, the polarities of life are represented, on a higher level, by being and activity, that is to say, by nature and spirit.

In the first paragraph, the history of philosophy is defined as the "representation of the ideas, principles, and doctrines by which the human spirit has revealed its enquiries and judgments concerning the essence of things" (p. 1). This "revelation" can take place either in a systematic way – and in this case it constitutes an organism consistent with itself – or in a fragmentary way – and in this case it presents only one determination with reference to the essence of things. Ideas and their development must be presented here as a "spiritual image of their temporal life", and the particularities characterising them must refer to the higher unity of the idea of philosophy. According to Ast, this idea represents the unity of the spirit embracing everything (*ibid.*); the individual systems, ideas, and doctrines, therefore, constitute the "revelation of the one and only spirit" and, albeit different, they are all linked together (p. 2).

Ast believed that, in relation to the idea of philosophy, the individual systems are indeed identical because, in fulfilling themselves, they must become universal and "no particularity is capable of presenting the universal as such" (*ibid.*). The fact that

particularities are related to the whole implies that even the opposition between being and knowing, idealism and realism, disappear, because philosophy cannot be reduced either to realism or idealism, Platonism or empirics (p. 3). An account of the history of philosophy must present the reciprocal permeation of the universal and the particular, so as to produce an “organically structured whole”. Philosophy as a universal is eternal and unitary, whereas its separate forms are temporal and diversified (pp. 4–5). It follows that empirics and speculation should not be in conflict either but should become integrated. In accordance with this conception, Ast asserted a harmonious connection within the history of philosophy, because the very life of philosophy is of a harmonious nature. The history of philosophy should also be arranged systematically, thus unfolding the life of philosophy: out of unity into opposition and back from opposition to unity (pp. 5–6).

Ast linked these ideas concerning the movement and the organic construction of philosophy to his reflections on the formation and development of life in nature. He believed that, just as life is related to the elements and periods of unity and opposition – birth, taking shape, and dissolving – so philosophy can “know the essence of things only in accordance with these elements and history can represent its temporal life only in accordance with these periods” (p. 7). Since speculation and empirics must unite and share the same life, it follows that without philosophy there can be no history. Yet, in turn, without history there is no philosophy because, in this case, philosophy would fall into pure formalism. The historian must therefore “describe facts considering them as the revelation of ideas”, and the philosopher must “unfold the facts of natural and human history with a view to actual life, thus making the ideal true” (p. 8).

Ast therefore considered the history of philosophy as part of universal history, which is natural history (that is, physical history) or ideal history (that is, the history of humanity). Since the “purest life of the human spirit” consists in philosophising, then the history of philosophy constitutes a part of the history of humanity. Now, in the history of philosophy, the human spirit does not manifest itself outwardly – as a sum of specific acts, usages, and customs – but immediately in action and inner aspiration. Hence the history of philosophy is related to political and cultural history just as the history of humanity is related to natural history: “It is the history of history, namely, the inner life and actions of the spirit, from which every other element, both political and ethical, originates” (pp. 8–9). In this perspective, therefore, the history of philosophy is seen as a universal science and is at the same time defined as a “history of history”. As is also evident from his short remark on the false definition of the description of nature as natural history, Ast made use of an unusual theoretical concept of history, which might have been influenced by the Schellingian pattern of the “stratification” of consciousness.

The theoretical use of the concept of history, however, can also be ascribed to the close relationship between history and system, a concept which was further developed by Rixner, almost disappeared in Windischmann, and later reappeared more temperately in Röth. Ast saw the organic formation of systems as the law governing the formation of the world, which therefore had a metaphysical value because it was immediately related to being. This generates the revealing character as well as the

ideal unity of the individual philosophical systems which become real according to the law of organic formation. In Ast's view, the history of philosophy thus acquires the significance of a supreme member of the organism, a universal science founding all the remaining domains of knowledge on logical bases.

3.1.4 *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie* *Hauptmomente der Geschichte der Philosophie*

3.1.4.1 The second, revised and expanded, edition of the *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie* consists of 446 pages, preceded by a short unnumbered preface (pp. [III]–[IV]) explaining the conception of the work. After the preface there is no index of subjects but an alphabetical index of names (unnumbered: pp. [V]–[VIII]). The theoretical introduction (pp. 1–15) is followed by a short bibliography, and the text is divided into 324 paragraphs organized into four periods which are in turn subdivided into sections and “epochs”: *Orientalische Philosophie* (pp. 16–44); *Realismus oder griechische und römische Philosophie* (pp. 45–180); *Idealismus oder Philosophie des Mittelalters* (pp. 181–310); *Erwachen des selbständigen Forschungsgeistes und Streben nach Wiedervereinigung des Realismus und Idealismus* (pp. 311–446). The text is followed by an appendix (*Übersicht der Geschichte der Philosophie*), which consists of a table presenting the ramifications of realism and idealism in the course of history up to the contemporary philosophy of identity.

The *Hauptmomente der Geschichte der Philosophie* (pp. iv–74) only provides a short summary of the *Grundriß*. The work begins with an index of names which has no title (pp. III–IV) and is followed by a foreword with no title either (pp. 1–3). The discussion of the subject matter is modelled on the four periods of the *Grundriß*, without any further internal subdivision.

3.1.4.2 In Ast's thought, the periodization rests on assumptions which derive from his conception of the history of philosophy. The theme of unity and the spirit's role as the foundation of its numerous manifestations in the history of philosophy are here further developed. The idea of an organic formation of the history of philosophy and ideas also plays an important role. Ast assumes that every formation constitutes a “development in time” and is determined by the sequence of the individual elements composing the formation itself. These elements, which represent something real or something ideal, and their mutual relationship, appear in each period and follow a circular movement thanks to the return of the last element to its starting point. The life of humanity itself follows this universal circular movement: its essence is therefore infinite and does not exist “in any [...] period in a thorough and complete way” (*Grundriß*, p. 9). In Ast's view, this eternal revelation of the undivided spirit is in conflict with its individual periods or elements, which, on the contrary, express themselves in an ideal or a real way.

Since the history of philosophy corresponds to the history of humanity, its subdivisions participate in the universal vital process, which manifests itself in four periods. The period characterized by the unity of original life corresponds to Oriental

humanity. Second is the period characterized by life's shifting away from that original and mythical unity in order to reach a public, that is, a political, community, which took place in classical Antiquity (realism). The third period consists in a return during the Middle Ages, from outer life to inner, spiritual life (idealism). Finally, the fourth period, the modern epoch, tries to reconcile outer and inner life (ideal-realism). Ast subordinates the history of philosophy to these periods of the universal history of humanity, which fluctuates between "inner spirit" and "outer" institutions.

This four-fold subdivision diverges from the threefold division which was common during the classical age, the Middle Ages, and the modern age, because Ast considered the East to be an autonomous epoch essential to the development of humanity. "Eastern philosophy", therefore, is the original philosophy of humanity, in which religious faith and poetical imagination are intertwined. In Ast's view, the particular reason for the development of the spiritual formation lies in the individual elements of the law of formation. The philosophy of the Indians (pp. 18–23) therefore represents the unity between the real element and the ideal element of Eastern philosophy. And the Tibetans (pp. 23–27), with their doctrine of spirit and inspiration, emphasise the ideal element of the formation of the spirit. The philosophy of the Chinese (pp. 27–33) goes back to "practical reality" by developing a moral of the intellect; and the Persians (pp. 33–39) present realism more clearly, just like the religion of the Egyptians (pp. 39–42). As the example of the Egyptians shows, Ast did not rigidly apply the elements forming realism and idealism to the epoch of Eastern philosophy, but placed their expression of a particular period in a reciprocal relation which is only relative. He spoke therefore of the idealism of the Chinese to the east of India and the realism of the Persians and the Egyptians to the west, while pointing out the practical attitude the Chinese had to life compared with the unity of the real and the ideal in Indian thought.

The second epoch in the history of philosophy starts with Greek philosophy which, together with Roman, represents a moment of realism. Greek philosophy is in turn subdivided into five epochs. The first is still a *Mythisches Zeitalter* (pp. 49–53), that is to say, it constitutes the prelude to philosophy strictly speaking: it still represents an original unity of the real and the ideal, from which the second epoch departs with the realism of Ionic philosophy (Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Anaxagoras: pp. 53–60). The third epoch is marked again by an idealism, which is put forward by Italic philosophy, whose exponents include Pythagoras and his disciples as well as some transitional figures such as Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Zeno with his scepticism (pp. 60–82). In the fourth epoch the realism of the Ionians and the idealism of the Pythagoreans are reconciled in a higher unity, which Ast identifies with the *Attische Philosophie* (sophistry, Socrates and the corresponding schools, and Plato: pp. 83–132). Plato and Aristotle's philosophies, which Ast considers to be the fulfilment of Attic philosophy in an ethical direction, move into Stoicism and Epicureanism. The Epicureans conclude the cycle of the history of philosophy which started with the mythical Chaos of the Ionians, rose to the clarity of Platonism, and finally came to an end with the Epicurean vision of reality. *Römische Philosophie* (pp. 132–143), seen as the practical application of

Greek philosophy, constitutes, with the predominance of Stoic thought, a reaction (according to the general "law of formation") to the final Epicurean phase of Greek thought on one hand, and, on the other, it is the Eclectic prelude to the dissolution of Greek philosophy (*Auflösung der griechischen Philosophie*: pp. 144–180). This epoch constitutes the transition from realism to idealism and comprises the philosophy of the eclectics, the Hebrews (Philo, gnosticism, the cabbala), the Church Fathers (Justin, Clement of Alexandria, and Augustine), and finally Neoplatonism, that is to say, Alexandrian philosophy (including, among others, Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Porphyrius, and Proclus).

For Ast, the philosophy of the Middle Ages, which is classified as the third period, consists in *Idealismus*. Although the philosophy of this age may be considered as idealistic compared to ancient philosophy, in this epoch – like every other – an inner, ideal element is in opposition to an outer, real element: hence the *Dialektik des Mittelalters oder Scholastische Philosophie* (pp. 184–246) is distinguished from the *Mystik des Mittelalters* (pp. 247–310). The first epoch of Scholastic philosophy is identified as *Theologische Scholastik* (John Scottus Eriugena, Abelard, and Peter Lombard: pp. 185–195), in which a mystical thought deriving from Neoplatonism still prevailed. The second epoch of Scholastic philosophy is Aristotelische Scholastik (Arabic Aristotelianism, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus: pp. 195–246). The *Mystik des Mittelalters* originated from a profound unity with religion, although it subsequently developed the elements of Greek and Oriental mystical thought which were still embedded in it, turning – on one hand – to Platonic mystical thought and – on the other hand – to cabbalistic mysticism. In the end, these elements united again in the phase of religious theosophy. Medieval mystical thought thus spread over three epochs: *Theologische Mystik* (Hugh of St Victor, Bonaventure, and Nicolaus Cusanus: pp. 247–256), *Platonische und kabbalistische Mystik* (from Gemistus Plethon and Marsilio Ficino up to Ralph Cudworth and Henry More with reference to Platonism and Pico della Mirandola; and from Johann Reuchlin up to Giordano Bruno with reference to the influence of the cabbala: pp. 257–293) and *Theosophie* (Paracelsus, Robert Fludd, Jacob Böhme, and Johann Baptist Van Helmont: pp. 293–310).

The fourth period has a long title which precisely defines the spiritual development of this epoch in relation to the harmonious model of idealism proper to Ast: "A reawakening of the autonomous spirit of research and an attempt at reconciling realism and idealism". In medieval theosophy, knowledge manifested itself as an inner illumination (p. 314), whereas in the modern age it has the character of quiet reflection. The realm of the divine, which was the immediate object of that thought, gave way to the questions man asked about himself and his position in the world. Ast defines the first epoch of modern philosophy as *Realismus* (pp. 324–360), because what prevailed here was still empirics, that is to say a realism of reason (Spinoza and Malebranche) or a realism of the intellect (Locke, Shaftesbury, Adam Smith, and Hume). The second epoch of modern philosophy is characterised again by a form of *Idealismus* (pp. 360–428), which should be understood as a reaction against the phenomena of materialistic decline typical of the last phase of the realistic epoch after Hume and the Encyclopaedists. Ast sees the beginnings of modern

idealism in Leibniz and also interprets his successors (from Tschirnhausen, Thomasius, Wolff, Berkeley and Kant, up to Fichte) in the light of idealism. Nevertheless, he identifies three different forms of modern idealism: the realistic form of idealism is represented by Leibniz, the purely idealistic form by Berkeley, and the rational or transcendental form by Kant and Fichte. The third epoch of modern philosophy consists ultimately in *Idealrealismus*, which is marked especially by the philosophy of absolute reason elaborated by Schelling and his disciples, among whom Ast also places Hegel (pp. 428–446).

3.1.4.3 In the *Preface* to the *Grundriß* Ast already makes use of metaphysical principles such as being, activity, life, nature, spirit, universe, and God, which are at the basis of philosophical systems and, consequently, of the history of philosophy in general. The totality of these principles provides the “law of formation” (*Bildungsgesetz*) of the organic development of the history of philosophy, in which the movement of the spirit manifests itself in the opposition which exists between these elements. The relationship between the inner element and outer element, unity and multiplicity, thesis and antithesis, plays an important role for Ast in the movement of the spirit and affects both the structure of his work and his general theory of the history of philosophy.

As we have already observed, Ast believed the original philosophy of humanity was found in Oriental thought, which embodied religion and poetry in a still undivided state (p. 16). Like philosophy as a whole, Greek philosophy had a mythological, that is, a religious, origin. However, here too there subsequently emerged a distinction between “inner” and “outer” forms. The religion of the people was taken up again and developed by the poets, whereas the esoteric doctrines continued to exist in the religious doctrines and in mysteries in thinkers such as Pythagoras, Plato, and the Platonists. Ast considered the development of philosophy to be a reaction against the outer manifestations of popular mythology. Philosophy should cultivate the inner freedom of the spirit – an idea which should also be viewed with reference to the Schellingian connection between the concept of freedom and the concept of philosophy. The desire for freedom is also the reason for the hostility to poetry found in philosophers such as Heraclitus, Xenophanes, and Plato (p. 46).

Ast attempted to establish the Oriental roots of Greek thought from a historical point of view. The influence of the pre-Indo-Germanic Pelasgians and then the Indians penetrated through Northern Greece, manifesting itself in idealistic moments, whereas the subsequent Egyptian influence from south gave rise to realistic positions (pp. 47–49). The theory of the mythological origins of Greek philosophy is demonstrated by referring to the Orphic mysteries and is accompanied by the theory that the transition to philosophy had already taken place in Orpheus and in the other masters leading the people at that time.

After the realistic epoch inaugurated by Thales, the spirit departed from the intuition of nature, bringing to the fore inner intuition and therefore the knowledge of things (pp. 59–60). The mathematical intuition of a Pythagoras is presented as the most significant expression of this epistemological tendency. This mathematical consideration of things represents “the midpoint between physical and dialectic

observation, hence it alternates contemplatively between the real and the ideal. The ideal reproduction of reality which – with the help of numbers and geometric figures – derives from it, constitutes for Ast a step towards purely ideal intuition, which can occur only in idealrealism. Pythagoras' idealism, with Thales' realism and Plato's idealrealism, thus represents a fundamental element of Greek philosophy. With the introduction of Pythagorean thought in Empedocles' doctrine of elements and Democritus' atomism, the circle which had begun with Oriental myth is completed and moves to the higher level of idealrealism, which is represented by Attic philosophy, where the unity of thought and action, speculation and ethics is achieved. In this great classical phase of Greek philosophy, Aristotle, with his dry, rigorous method, is viewed as a disciple of Plato. Just as Socratic ethics had earlier provoked a conflict between the Cynics and the Cyrenaics, so the doctrines which came after Aristotle were marked by the conflict between Stoicism and Epicureanism. Stoicism is imbued with the tragic spirit of Doric thought inclining towards unity, whereas Epicureanism has the "fullness of the senses", which embodies the comic spirit of the Ionians (p. 121).

For Ast, the practical and political orientation characterising subsequent Roman philosophy did not lead to a real reception of Greek thought, nor did it produce any original reworking. The epoch of Roman philosophy is defined as decadent and "subservient", and the fundamental reasons for this situation are seen as the mutual contempt existing between the Greeks and the Romans, which hampered cultural exchange (p. 134). Thus the Romans accepted only the "ethical systems" of Greek philosophy, namely Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Scepticism. Ast recognized that the Romans had a free "ingenious spirit" in their political life alone (p. 144). However, in this case too he distinguishes between positive and negative – decadent or morbid – tendencies. Eclecticism in a negative sense therefore led to a blind combination of heterogeneous trends, whereas in a positive sense it led to a deep comprehension of the universality and unity of the domain of the spirit, which rises above the contradictory character of empirical reality (pp. 144–145). The constructive tendencies of eclecticism developed through Hebrew and Greek Neoplatonism and the doctrines of the Church Fathers up to the philosophy of the Middle Ages, which, in its entirety, is seen as the idealistic equivalent of ancient realism.

The Christianity predominant in the Middle Ages was "contemplative" and ultimately revealed an Oriental nature (p. 181). Scholasticism, however, was opposed to this intimate and mystical spiritual life and intensified the exterior elements. The philosophy of the Middle Ages as a whole was closely related to religion as far as its contents were concerned, but not as to its form, that is to say, the dialectic method, which sometimes manifested itself as a mere game. Philosophy thus found in dialectic the formal autonomy which it had not been able to achieve in a content conditioned by religion: it "could not express itself productively; and therefore it could not manifest its free life in philosophical subject matter, but exclusively in form, hence in dialectic" (p. 182).

Ast believed that in modern philosophy the individual elements or moments of the spirit, which had previously been separated, joined together to a greater extent than in the Middle Ages. The path of divine revelation, that is, the history of the life

of the spirit, now aimed at its fulfilment (p. 313). In the process of the formation of modern philosophy, the major thinkers were Spinoza, Fichte, and Schelling. In contrast to the “illusory dream” cherished in the Middle Ages, the modern age is described as an awakening (*Erwachen*), in which the autonomous spirit of research is revived. During the first epoch of the modern age, “the life of things” was determined by free knowledge, without presupposing they had supreme essence. The principle and the aim of this first epoch are represented by the intellect and reason, fields associated, on one hand, with the realism of the English Enlightenment, and, on the other, with the realism of Spinoza and Malebranche. The spiritual pole opposed to realism is represented by the second epoch, in which the elements of imagination and love played a notable role. Ast finds these elements again in the doctrine of divine perfections elaborated by Leibniz, whose monadology and theory of the pre-established harmony he believed to be doctrines leading to modern idealism. From this universalistic point of view, Leibniz proved to be the founder of German philosophy (pp. 360–361).³² However, he was not yet a pure idealist but alternated between representation and thought, substance and soul; and not even in his monadology, did he elaborate an authentic idealism. Explicit idealism was first put forward by Berkeley, in opposition to Locke’s empiricism; yet only Kant and Fichte’s “rational” thought led to the third epoch of idealism (p. 389).

Fichte brought transcendental idealism to fulfilment; his starting point was Kant and as a foundation, considered as a general principle of knowledge, he used the acts of the “Self”, the “original acts” (*Urtathandlungen*), and not consciousness and the presupposition of objects. Nevertheless, this idealism was still objective. In this third epoch, only Schelling and Friedrich Schlegel’s idealrealism actually attained the philosophy of absolute reason (pp. 428–429). Ast believed that the essential expression of this reason was Schelling’s identification of the subjective with the objective on the basis of Spinoza’s system. Hegel’s philosophy is only viewed in the light of Schelling’s philosophy and is merely reduced to the “particular” conception of logic (p. 443). Finally, Ast attaches great importance to the aim, pursued by the romantics and Schelling in particular, of bringing philosophy back to Christianity, against the common mistake at that time of rigorously separating faith and knowledge. Ast indeed considered faith to be the “first foundation and beginning [...] of free and vital knowledge”. Philosophy indeed represents supreme, universal knowledge which presupposes the positive knowledge available to it as something certain and reveals it as living knowledge. On this supreme level of consideration all philosophy is Christian philosophy (p. 446).

3.1.4.4 Ast’s organization of his material is based entirely on the metaphysical distinctions contained in his preface to the *Grundriß*. In this context, the real, the ideal, and the real-ideal moment of being and the life of the spirit is adopted as a “law of formation” of philosophy and of science, which derives its complex development

³² In 1789 Gmeiner had already invested Leibniz with the role as the founder of German philosophy, not because of his universalistic philosophy but because of his ability to found a school and his independence from Descartes (cf. *Models*, III, p. 512).

from simple, general principles, which are diametrically opposed to one another. The law of the formation of being also provides a genetic theory, that is to say, a philosophy of history as a basis for the history of philosophy, which goes beyond the schematic and systematic understanding of theories and suggests connections between the individual polarities.

This interpretative framework, however, gives Ast a certain freedom in presenting his account, which is constructive and hermeneutically oriented. On one hand, the law of formation explains the world of natural phenomena (minerality, vegetativeness, animality, and intellectuality), and on the other it describes the world of the spirit (the values of the true, the good, the beautiful, and the holy). Ast's hermeneutic orientation certainly originates as a result of his interest in philological questions but it then embraces the general philosophical conception of nature and history, which represent different forms of organisation of the same existence. The framework of the law of formation thus greatly exceeds the limited needs of the historiography of philosophy and founds the explanation of the world on very general bases of a metaphysical kind. Ast however does not suggest how these basic theories can be concretely developed, but refers to his hermeneutic objective which consists in understanding the fundamental spiritual positions, explaining them, and placing them within larger frameworks. It is the theory of the history of philosophy itself that supplies and represents the method. This applies to those doctrines which can be traced back to more ancient opinions, such as the Pythagorean influence on Empedocles' theory of the elements; but it applies even more to systematic constructions, such as Ast's proposal to introduce the mathematical perspective as an intermediary between physical investigation and dialectic (logical) enquiry into things.

Ast's constructive process is not only manifest in his immediate reference to the fundamental metaphysical principles of realism and idealism in relation to the separate periods and epochs of the history of philosophy. His method also includes metaphorical expressions and comparisons by means of images; this happens, for example, when he divides Greek theatre into tragedy and comedy, considered as a scheme of reference which can be applied to certain philosophical currents of Antiquity. Of greater significance is his use of a model of the cyclical development of the history of philosophy, in which the various periods unfold cyclically as the contrasts arising subsequently return to their original unity. This model, which was generally used by the Schellingians, clearly emerges in Ast in its further application to the epicycles of the history of the spirit. Its metaphorical language ("inner" and "outer", "separation" and "reunion") and the fact that it compares the development of theories to the progress of a day show the importance of this circular movement in explaining organic development, which is itself conceived of as a model.

It is the idea of identity which induces Ast to draw such parallels and rigorously apply the framework of idealism-realism to the different systematic formations. Only in this way can he understand philosophy as an organism. Facts and speculation therefore condition and interpenetrate each other. In other words, the historian must present separate facts as a revelation of the fundamental principles, and the

different ideas or theories must in turn be presented by the philosopher in their empirical and historical actuality (p. 8). The reciprocal interpenetration of the empirical and the speculative dimension takes place from different perspectives, on a philological as well as on a philosophical level. Thanks to his speculative insight into the facts, the historian of philosophy is therefore the first who can awaken the spirit of the theories and the epochs to an authentic life.

This has to take place on the basis of an extremely careful consideration of the spiritual testimonies of the past. What matters here is not completeness because the “chief moments” of the history of philosophy are enough to demonstrate the effect of the law of organic formation. A limited quantity of examples is enough to demonstrate the essential. On the other hand, it is necessary to take into consideration all the documents and sources which provide important points of reference concerning the epochs of the past. The most ancient period of Oriental philosophy, considered as the original philosophy of humanity, is thus outlined with extreme care as regards the individual peoples (Indians, Tibetans, Chinese, Persians, and Egyptians) because all the other currents arose from their spiritual attitudes. As a classical philologist, Ast was interested above all in ancient philosophy, although, unlike Kantian historiography of philosophy, he did not neglect the East. An in-depth examination of the bibliography is also important because the testimonies of the life of the spirit are revealed to the researcher through the philological disciplines and the science of Antiquity. However, it is only the historian of philosophy who can provide an appropriate evaluation through his work of construction.

3.1.5 Ast deserves an important place among the historians of philosophy of the Schellingian school because he was the first to apply its principles to the history of philosophy. His hypothesis of organic laws of formation, which determine the periods of the history of philosophy, and the related concept of the life of the spirit, as well as the idea of a fundamental harmony in the history of the spirit, were fully shared by the Schellingian historians of philosophy. Rixner blindly followed Ast’s application of the Schellingian theme of polarity and opposition to the historical development of philosophy, to such an extent that Eduard Zeller felt inclined to prove what he called Rixner’s “plagiarism” with detailed textual comparisons (Zeller, pp. 27–28).

The methodological use of the mutual interpenetration between speculative moments and empiristic elements, which was first formulated clearly by Ast, also appears in Rixner and especially in Röth, whose overall conception of the history of philosophy was closely connected to this relationship between empirical knowledge and speculation. Ast’s concept of revelation was also present in Rixner and Röth, but not in Windischmann, who took this concept directly from Schelling. The circular model of the development of the history of philosophy elaborated by Ast reappeared however in Windischmann as a result of his idea of organism and harmony (even though it too may have derived directly from the influence of Schelling). Hegel also used a cyclic or epicyclic model for the history of philosophy, albeit with reference to the notion of progress, and he assigned specific features to the individual periods, leading Joachim Wach to interpret Ast’s framework of periodisation

as a prelude to Hegel's (Wach, *Das Verstehen*, I, p. 35; here Wach only mentions the remote influence exercised by Herder on Ast and neglects the more recent influence of Schelling).

In the Schellingian school, the influence exercised by the hermeneutic significance of the idea of identity or totality, which is related to the cyclic model of organism, was greater than the effect produced by the cyclic model itself. Since it is a *philosophia perennis*, the history of philosophy can only be understood by the Schellingians by means of universal, metaphysical points of view rather than distinct expressions formulated by individual thinkers, as the Kantian historians of philosophy believed. Hence, for Ast, the universal life of the spirit underlies both the individual thought elaborated by writer in the past and the interpretation of him by the historian of philosophy in the present. When this concept (revealing a "superior life of the spirit") is applied to the history of philosophy, it also provided Rixner, Windischmann, and Röth with an essential basis for understanding the concrete written testimonies of the past with reference to their metaphysical, epochal, and generally historical and cultural significance. In this case, the work of the historian of philosophy does not consist in the Kantian *post factum* rationalization of particular tendencies, but in an effort to discover global contexts and awaken the life of the spirit through investigation.

This aim of speculatively penetrating the entire history of philosophy, that is, the need for all-embracing explanations, was to arouse criticism of Ast, and his method of proceeding by analogy in particular. Carl Friedrich Bachmann, in his *Über Philosophie und ihre Geschichte* (Jena, 1811), observed that in Ast everything floats into "such a confused generality that no definite figure can originate. His playing with magniloquent phrases seeks in vain to conceal the lack of study of the sources; and the spirit [...] of a profound and comprehensive conception does not consist in covering the separate things with the absolute like a large hat, but in knowing each figure in its innermost individuality as an emanation from the eternal" (p. 65). More concise but moving in the same direction is Hegel's critical commentary, according to which Ast's history of philosophy, even though it is "written in a better disposition" than that of Tennemann, represents "principally Schelling's philosophy", albeit in a rather confused way, and "introduces an excessively formalistic separation of philosophy into ideal philosophy and real philosophy" (Hegel, *Werke* (Frankfurt a.M., 1969–1971), XVIII, p. 136). Schleiermacher's philologically oriented followers, who followed their own path with Brandis, judged Ast's principles of construction to be unacceptable, not so much because of their speculative failings as because of the wrong use of typology, which threatened to pass over the individual and biographical aspects too easily, which they instead considered to be important for the history of philosophy. Nevertheless, as a hermeneutist, Ast had influenced Schleiermacher himself; hence, by virtue of his Schellingian features, Ast indirectly influenced Schleiermacher's disciples as well, in so far as, on a hermeneutical basis, they developed concepts which were alternative from a critical point of view, and their remote effect still emerges in Zeller's criticism of Ast. When compared with the other Schellingians, Ast's influence in the field of the historiography of philosophy was always very clear.

3.1.6 On Ast's life and works: Meusel, XIII, pp. 40–41; XVII, pp. 53–54; XXII/I, p. 76; W.T. Krug, *Allgemeines Handwörterbuch der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1832), p. 234; *Neuer Nekrolog der Deutschen*, ed. by A. Schmidt and B. Voigt, XIX (Ilmenau, 1843), p. 1021; *ADB*, I, pp. 626–627; *NDB*, I, pp. 420–421; Gumposch, pp. 356–357; Ueberweg, IV, p. 58; L. Noack, *Philosophiegeschichtliches Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1879), p. 58; J.E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1908), III, p. 112; *Enzyklopädie, Philosophie und Wissenschaftstheorie*, ed. by J. Mittelstrass (Mannheim, Vienna, and Zürich, 1980), I, p. 190.

On criticism: C.Fr. Bachmann, *Über Philosophie und ihre Geschichte* (Jena, 1811), p. 65; Michelet¹, XVIII, p. 136; Zeller, pp. 25–28; J.E. Erdmann, *Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Darstellung der neuern Philosophie*, 6 vols (Riga and Leipzig, 1834–1853), repr. in 7 vols, ed. by H. Glockner (Stuttgart, 1931–1934), III/2, p. 227; H. Heß, 'Das romantische Bild der Philosophiegeschichte', *Kant-Studien*, XXXI (1926), pp. 269–272; J. Wach, *Das Verstehen* (Tübingen, 1926), I, pp. 35–36; Banfi, p. 118; B. Croce, *Filosofia e storiografia. Saggi* (Bari, 1949), p. 179; K. Willimczik, *Friedrich Asts Geschichtsphilosophie im Rahmen seiner Gesamtphilosophie* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1967), pp. 115–132; R.E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, Ill., 1969), pp. 76–81; Geldsetzer, pp. 56–59, 178, 187, 201; Braun, pp. 297–303; Gueroult, p. 469; M. Ravera, F. Vercellone, and T. Griffero, *Friedrich Ast: estetica ed ermeneutica*, in *Aesthetica Preprint*, XVII (1987); P. Szondi, *Introduction to literary hermeneutics* (Cambridge and New York, 1995); P.K.J. Park, *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780–1830* (Albany, NY, 2013), pp. 97–111 ('The Exclusion of Africa and Asia under Absolute Idealism: Friedrich Ast's and Thaddäus Anselm Rixner's Histories of Philosophy').

3.2 Thaddäus Anselm Rixner (1766–1838)

Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie.

3.2.1 Thaddäus Anselm Rixner was born in Tegernsee on 3rd August, 1766, the son of a farmer. Because of a partial paralysis affecting the right side of his body as the result of an accident he incurred as a child, he was unable to follow his father's profession and was encouraged by his father to devote himself to study. The young Rixner attended the conventual school in his hometown, which was renowned at the time, and subsequently the Benedictines secondary school in Freising, where at the age of only seventeen he engaged in a public debate regarding physics and philosophy. After completing his studies, in 1787 he entered the Benedictine order in the monastery of Metten, and two years later was ordained priest.

The abbot of his monastery sent Rixner to Ingolstadt, where he studied law. It was in this period that Rixner's interest in philosophy began; shortly after his return to Metten, in the years 1792–1794, he was asked to teach philosophy in his former school in Freising, and was then called back to his monastery where he held lessons on theology and was appointed librarian. In addition, he also held the post of vicar in the parish of Michelsbuch near Deggendorf, which belonged to his monastery. In this period he devoted himself to the study of the history of philosophy and wrote two outlines of philosophy intended for school students. After the abolition of monasteries, in 1803 he became a professor of philosophy in the secondary school of Amberg, but after two years moved to Passau, where he continued to teach until 1808, when the school was closed as a result of a reform implemented by Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer ("*Allgemeines Normativ für Bayern*"). After this closure, Rixner was offered a post as a teacher of philosophical propaedeutics, but this proposal did not meet with his approval, and he asked for temporary leave, which he was granted for one year because in 1809 the chair of philosophy in Amberg had become vacant. He subsequently taught here uninterruptedly until his definitive retirement in 1834.

Rixner spent the last years of his life in Munich, in the house of his friend Thaddäus Siber. As he had in the meantime been appointed extraordinary member of the Academy of Sciences, he used this period in Munich to attend Schelling's lectures and study in the Staatsbibliothek. He died on 10th February, 1838 of a sudden apoplexy. A lengthy obituary described his kindness, modesty, earnestness, and his fondness for order and enthusiasm for teaching.

3.2.2 Rixner's writings reflect his varied interest in the philosophical and literary life of his time and his cultural and spiritual roots. His *Geschichte der Studienanstalt zu Amberg. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der bayerischen gelehrten Schulen* (Sulzbach, 1832) and the relative *Nachträge zur Geschichte der Studienanstalt* (Sulzbach, 1832) might therefore be considered as preparation for the more extensive *Geschichte der Philosophie bei den Katholiken in Altbayern* (1835).

Philosophical, speculative, and pedagogical themes provided the inspiration for his anthologies, which were written to explain the most important concepts elaborated by the great scholars in simple words: *Weisheits-Sprüche und Witzreden aus Johann Georg Hamanns und Immanuel Kants sämtlichen Schriften, auserlesen und alphabetisch geordnet, mit den einleitenden Charakteristiken beider Männer* (Amberg, 1828); *Weisheits-Sprüche und Witzreden aus Theodor Gottlieb v. Hippels und Jean Paul Friedrich Richters Schriften, [...] mit den einleitenden Charakteristiken beider Männer und einem Anhang aus deutschen Spruchdichtern des Mittelalters versehen* (Amberg, 1834); *Vom Wahrsagen und Weissagen, ein Auszug aus Ciceros Buch von der göttlichen Sehergabe (de divinatione), samt einem Anhang merkwürdiger Wahr- und Weissagungen der letzten 4 Jahrhunderte der christlichen Zeitrechnung* (Sulzbach, 1831). In the same years he also wrote the anonymous *Brief aus und nach Abdera gegen die Verächter und Lasterer der Spekulation* (Sulzbach, 1831). In his etymological dictionary, Rixner similarly expressed his philosophical and pedagogical aims: *Handwörterbuch der deutschen Sprache, mit*

Hinweisen auf ihre Ableitung, für Vernunft-, Sprach- und Geschichtsforscher (Sulzbach, 1830, 2 vols).

Rixner's philosophical writings show that he was a romantic thinker, whose knowledge of Schelling did not only ensue from their personal encounter in Munich. The works he had written during his youth, which were linked to the context of school and education, also show traces of the influence exercised by German idealism: *Synopsis institutionum philosophicarum* (Monachii, 1795); *Conspectus universae Metaphysicae sive naturae sive morum una cum positionibus Ethicae universalis et specialis nec non Juris naturae ac Matheseos* (Straubingae, 1797). This is especially true of the comparative re-elaborations Rixner wrote in German, which reveal the influence of Schelling: *Aphorismen aus der Philosophie, als Leitfaden für den ersten Unterricht der angehenden Wissenschafts-Kandidaten. Erstes Heft, die 1ste und 2te Abtheilung enthaltend, nebst der allgemeinen Einleitung zur Philosophie*: 1. *Die Methodik und Erklärung des werdenden Wissens* (anthropology, logic, dialectic); 2. *Die Grundlinien der Theorie des nothwendigen, unbedingten und bedingten Seyns* (metaphysics) (Landshut, 1809); further re-elaboration: *Aphorismen der gesammten Philosophie, zum Gebrauche lyzeistischer Vorlesungen*, vol. I: *Rein-theoretische Philosophie*; vol. II: *Praktische und ästhetische Philosophie* (Sulzbach, 1818).

This type of research continued, not lacking in mystical speculation, beginning with Ast's review on Rixner's translation 'Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der uralten indischen All-Eins-Lehre', in *Asts Journal für Wissenschaft und Kunst*, Bd. I, Heft 3 (Landshut, 1808), pp. 104–107, which was only an introduction to Rixner's following ambitious approach 'Darstellung des Fundaments der All-Eins-Lehre an den Formeln der Infinitesimal-Rechnung', *ibid.*, Bd. II, Heft 2 (Landshut, 1810), pp. 1–26. Rixner's interests went beyond pure speculation to metaphysical and mathematical considerations touching the topic of the actual infinite. This attests Rixner's ability to understand distant forms of thought from a conceptual and a scientific point of view.

But he also showed a lively interest in the modern origins of the sciences of nature. In this case too his foremost objective was to carry out translations from the original texts: *Von den Wissenschaften und ihrer Lehrweise, ein Auszug aus Franz Bacon's v. Verulam Büchern vom Wachsthume der Wissenschaften und neuem Organon* (Amberg, 1825), also in *Leipziger Magazin für Industrie und Literatur* (1827). His intense appreciation of the study of nature on empirical bases and, at the same time, his inclination towards an organic philosophy of nature, as a result of the influence of Schelling, induced him to write remarkable biographies of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century philosophers of nature, which he edited together with Thaddäus Siber and which contain extended passages quoted in German from their respective works: *Leben und Lehrmeinungen berühmter Physiker am Ende des 16. und am Anfange des 17. Jahrhunderts* (7 Hefte, Sulzbach, 1819–1826). The texts came from Theophrastus Paracelsus, Girolamo Cardano, Bernardino Telesio, Francesco Patrizi, Giordano Bruno, Tommaso Campanella, and Johann Baptist van Helmont. A review of Immanuel Hermann Fichte's *Beiträge zur Charakteristik der*

neueren Philosophie zur Vermittlung ihrer Gegensätze (Sulzbach, 1829) shows that Rixner also viewed the latest trends of contemporary philosophy with interest.

Finally, we come to the history of philosophy: the *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie zum Gebrauche seiner Vorlesungen*, 3 vols (Sulzbach, 1822–1823); 2nd ed., 1829, repr. with a *Supplement* by Victor Philipp Gumposch, 4 vols (Sulzbach, 1850). Besides this work we must also mention the *Geschichte der Philosophie bei den Katholiken in Altbayern, bayerisch Schwaben und bayerisch Franken* (Munich, 1835).

3.2.3 In Rixner, the concept of philosophy and the history of philosophy is based on pedagogical as well as speculative grounds: his purpose is to start from a factual basis and grasp the history of philosophy in its encyclopaedic comprehensiveness. In the preface to *Aphorismen aus der Philosophie* (1809), Rixner sets himself the task of discovering the correct beginning in teaching philosophy and quotes as a motto two passages from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which the beginner requires the clarity of science and a corresponding introduction. For Rixner, this introduction is an aid to conceptual understanding and memory. Rixner's dependence on Hegel is stressed in the re-elaboration of this handbook (1818) when he affirms that he would have abandoned the idea of writing the work if he had known about Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*, which was published in 1817. Even the parts of the handbook devoted to the "phenomenology of spirit or scientific anthropology" (*Aphorismen der gesamten Philosophie*, pp. 45–124) show Rixner's Hegelian leanings during the first phase of his thought.

With his "fragmentary or aphoristic" style, however, Rixner also followed other paths which date back to a period earlier than Hegel and can be traced back, for example, to Ernst Platner's *Philosophische Aphorismen* (cf. *Models*, III, p. 545). Rixner justifies the aphoristic form of his work with the aim of presenting the theories "in a complete way according to a systematic order", while his oral lessons served to explain, or to present in other words the "scientific deduction" of these theories (pp. 3–4). The idea of achieving completeness by using aphorisms is not in contrast with the theories of Romanticism, but the systematic form seems anachronistic with respect to the ideas of Friedrich Schlegel and the Schellingians. By using aphorisms, the Schellingians intended precisely to protect themselves against the dangers of systematic inflexibility. In Rixner, as previously in Platner, the ancient notion clearly survives of 'aphorism', meaning 'paragraph' or 'chapter'; only subsequently, according to the use customary during the Enlightenment, was it to acquire the meaning of a stylistic means for strengthening the precision of an assertion. Besides this latter use, Rixner presents his history of aphoristic philosophy as a fragmentary framework of the history of the spirit, and therefore, from this point of view, it belongs to the Schellingian tradition.

For Rixner, philosophy is a comprehensive system of knowledge. In his manual, he considers "philosophy in opposition to every other science, which is non-philosophy". Although the choice of this expression seems to have been suggested

by Karl August Eschenmayer³³ (and hence by Schelling too), who attempted to positively overcome the philosophical dimension into the sphere of faith and presentiment, he includes in the realm of *Nichtphilosophie* the contents of knowledge which lie below philosophy strictly speaking, namely, those which have not yet reached the level of philosophy. In this context, Rixner understands the logical theory of the concept as the “phenomenology of spirit”, as a science of consciousness in general, not as an empirical anthropology (p. 23), as is the case, for example, of the anthropological foundation of the concept of philosophy in Christoph Meiners and Fichte.

Philosophy as a “science which is immediately certain of knowledge and essence though itself” (p. 20), has the task of investigating the ideas of the true, the good, and the beautiful, which are “unconditioned, primary, and eternally existing in themselves”. Hence philosophy is, with reference to its origin, a “purely rational, therefore truly divine” science; with reference to its content, a real as well as an ideal science; and with reference to its method, a science which is productive of “spiritual intuition” (p. 21). Such an elevated conception reveals strong agreement with the Schellingian philosophy of identity, both with respect to the identity of the real and the ideal, and with respect to intellectual intuition. Even the moment involving the state of originality as an essential characteristic of metaphysical ideas must be understood by referring first to Schelling. Hence for Rixner philosophy is not reduced to a doctrine of science in general, which concerns the method of knowledge, but must also embrace the “doctrine of essence” or metaphysics. The doctrine of science is subdivided into logic and mathematics, the doctrine of essence into the metaphysics of truth, rightfulness, and beauty.

Even on this more general plane of reflection, Rixner evaluates and defines the subject matter of metaphysical research in a concrete fashion. Indeed, here, history provides a “collection of documents for metaphysics (*Urkundenbuch zur Metaphysik*)” (p. 23). In this passage, the word ‘history’ is not understood as a chronologically structured account or as the derivation of one historical fact from another, but rather as the Schellingian conception of philosophy as a “history of self-consciousness” (*Geschichte des Selbstbewußtseins*). The concept of history adopted here refers back to Aristotle’s ἱστορία, which concerns the description of individual events. This point of view becomes even more evident in the etymological analysis of the concept of history that Rixner formulates in his *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*: “Hence ‘history’ (*Geschichte*) in German seems to correspond to that which has attained a layer (*Schichte*), that is, absolute quietness or stillness, because *factum infectum fieri nequit*; or else, one may derive *Geschichte* more strictly from *geschehen*, ‘happen’” (ed. 1829, p. 1).³⁴ Here we can also note

³³ Cf. K.A. Eschenmayer, *Die Philosophie in ihrem Übergang zur Nichtphilosophie* (Erlangen, 1803). Schelling was moved by a religious interest and tried to go beyond a mere philosophy of sentiment and, hence, to go beyond Eschenmayer’s idea too.

³⁴ In the first edition, Rixner still derives the concept of history from *geschehen* (I, p. 1) and does not try to find a moment of stasis in the Greek concept of history, based on the etymology from Plato’s *Cratylus*. It is evident that Rixner only gradually assimilated the Schellingian concept of

the importance given to the metaphor of "the collection of documents for metaphysics", which embraces the history of religion and philosophy, the experimental science of nature, the history of humanity and states, and the history of art. In this way, history is significant for every field of knowledge up to the domain of metaphysics. Through history Rixner is able to show the connection between the "historical layers", that is, the particular facts, and the more general metaphysical ideas. Moreover, in his *Aphorismen der gesamten Philosophie*, he distinguishes between philosophy as a doctrinal system of a scientific kind, namely an "artificial construction" (*Kunstgebilde*), and philosophy as an "expression of the mere instinct of reason (*Äusserung des bloßen Vernunftinstinkts*)" (p. 25). This distinction between instinctive, natural manifestations and systematic doctrines is important for the interpretation of the history of philosophy understood as the revelation of more and more distinct expressions of the life of the spirit.

In his *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, Rixner departs from the Kantian tendencies still present in the *Aphorismen* and comes much closer than in his previous writings to the ideas of Schelling. Schelling is thus evoked when the history of philosophy is considered as a system of the "progressive enquiry of reason into original being and original knowledge (*über das Urseyn und das Urwissen*)" (*Handbuch*, ed. 1829, 'Vorrede' to the first edition, p. v). Nevertheless, this also corresponds to Hegel's intention not to provide an "arbitrary aggregate" of philosophical theories and to identify the history of philosophy with a "whole which is entirely complete in itself and structured according to specific rules", and in which the individual philosophical systems have developed according to the increasingly elevated degree of culture reached by peoples. As regards the construction of a theory, the concept of the history of philosophy presents a predominance of Schellingian elements, such as, for example, when Rixner states that "an assured deduction (*Ableitung*) of the present from the past and of the future from both of them is possible" (*Handbuch*, I, 'Einleitung', p. 2). Besides the dimensions of time, signs of Rixner's knowledge of Schelling are also evident in his conception of a "revelation of the spirit [...] inclining towards scientific self-intuition (*wissenschaftlichen Selbstanschauung*)" and his interpretation of a philosophical system as an integral component of an "entire organism" (*Gesamt-Organismus*) (p. 3).

Within general history, Rixner distinguishes between the history of nature and "human history" (*Menschengeschichte*). A distinction is also established between "civil and political" history and the history of philosophy, which are considered as the exterior and the interior side of human history respectively (p. 10). In particular, the history of philosophy constitutes "the pursuit, the announcement, and the scientific description of the origin and temporal becoming of the science of foundations and of the supreme laws of nature and freedom, and hence of the ideas, principles, and opinions through which the human spirit has revealed and expressed its attempts

stratification (*Schichtung*) as applied to the historical dimension. This concept was used by J. Chr.A. Grohmann in 1798 by speaking explicitly of "*das .. 'Geschichte der Philosophie'*" after explaining the method of how to correctly describe p.e. birds within their appropriate system. The idea behind this was Linné's *Systema Naturae*. Cf. Geldsetzer, p. 142.

to gain self-knowledge, also including the knowledge of the totality and the divinity” (pp. 2–3). Identifying such metaphysical knowledge with spiritual self-knowledge not only attests to the supreme value that the history of philosophy holds for Rixner, but also refers back once again to Schelling’s philosophy of identity.

Rixner compares the “elements” of the history of philosophy to the soul and the body, that is, to parts of an organism. The ideal element is therefore the common spirit characterised by the “understanding of reason” (*Vernunft-Einsicht*), which in some way ensures internal unity in the multiplicity of the course of the history of philosophy. The real element of the history of philosophy consists instead in the individual principles and theories (p. 4) which are emphasised by the daily work of the historian. Rixner explains the sequence of individual systems by referring to the dialectic and organic trends of development. Each individual philosophical system can contain “invariably and exclusively a particular and partial account” of the whole eternal truth, and therefore presents essentially “a mortal side”, starting from which another system, which is opposed to it, confutes it (p. 5). The consequence of this natural circle of the spirit for the historiography of philosophy is that each individual theory is considered as a particular and partial representation; at the same time, all the theories considered as a whole are viewed as a systematic totality (pp. 5–6). Compared to this internal determination of the history of philosophy, Rixner has to explain its external determination more precisely with the aid of the history of humanity. The history of human civilisation is thus separated from natural history, just as the history of philosophy is separated from civil and political history. The history of philosophy corresponds to an internal, ideal spiritual model, whereas the history of civil and political culture manifests itself as an external, real, and corporeal image, in so far as it has as its object “actions, constitutions, customs, and external laws” (p. 9). This is the real transposition of the internal act of the spirit to the history of philosophy. Finally, the epochs of the history of philosophy, considered as the internal history of the civilisation of the human spirit, coincide with the periods of the history of humanity (pp. 11–12).

3.2.4 *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*

3.2.4.1 The second edition of the *Handbuch*, which we have used here, is subdivided, just like the first, into three volumes. The first deals with the *Geschichte der alterthümlichen sowohl barbarischen als klassischen Philosophie* (which takes up 178 paragraphs), the second with the *Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* (145 paragraphs), and the third with the *Geschichte der Philosophie der neueren und neuesten Zeit* (227 paragraphs). Volume I opens with the ‘Vorrede’, that is, the preface to the first edition (pp. III–V), which is followed by the preface to the second edition (p. VI), a detailed index (pp. VII–XVI), an introduction or ‘Einleitung’ (pp. 1–14), and finally a bibliography containing important histories of philosophy as well as the relevant collections of materials.

Barbarian and Oriental philosophy is discussed in the first section of the first volume (pp. 17–41), which is separated from the second section, where Rixner presents Greek and Roman philosophies (pp. 42–400). Barbarian and Oriental

philosophy is subdivided into three smaller chapters, which describe early Indian philosophy (pp. 21–23), Tibetan and Chinese philosophies (pp. 23–32), and the philosophies of the Persians, Egyptians, and the remaining philosophy of the Near East (pp. 33–41). The second section is subdivided into three extensive parts: *Griechische oder hellenische Philosophie* (pp. 42–321), *Römische Philosophie* (pp. 321–341), and *Auflösung der heidnischen Philosophie* (pp. 342–400), the latter of which is devoted to the dissolution of ancient thought and the Church Fathers. At the end of the first volume, even though it is not mentioned in the index, we find an 'Appendix of documents' (*Anhang urkundlicher Beilagen zur Geschichte der alterthümlichen, sowohl barbarischen als klassischen Philosophie*, pp. 1–119). It contains excerpts from the Indian *Oupnek'hat*, an Orphic hymn quoted by Eusebius, some fragments from Heraclitus, a table illustrating the Pythagorean cosmology, some fragments from the doctrinal poems of Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Empedocles, as well as a prayer addressed by Crates to the Muses, and some hymns by Cleanthes and Synesius, most of which are quoted in Greek and German.

The second volume is divided into three parts; after the table of contents (pp. III–VIII) and a short introduction (pp. 3–4), the volume concerns the *Dialektik oder Scholastik des Mittelalters* and the *Mystik des Mittelalters* (pp. 4–172 and 172–192), and finally Renaissance philosophy, the "transition" to the modern age (*Übergang vom Mittelalter in die neuere Zeit. Wiederaufleben der alten klassischen Philosophie, und zugleich Erneuerung der Cabbalistik und Mystik, sammt allerlei dadurch veranlasssten neuen Combinations-Versuchen*, pp. 192–312). The second volume ends with an appendix, which is not included in the index either (*Urkundlicher Anhang zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, pp. 1–119) and contains excerpts from the works of John Scotus Eriugena, Anselm of Aosta, Abelard, John of Salisbury, Alan of Lille, William of Auvergne, Vincent of Beauvais, Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, Raymond Lull (from Brucker, *Kurtze Fragen*, vol. VI), Raymond of Sabunde, and Jakob Böhme.

The third volume opens with an index (pp. III–xvi) and a short theoretical introduction (pp. 3–7) and is divided into three epochs: *Erste Epoche. Aufblühen einer neuen theils versuchenden, theils raisonnierenden Weltweisheit* ('Flourishing of a new philosophy, which is partially experimental and partially rational'), from the second half of the seventeenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth (pp. 8–114); *Zweite Epoche. Neuer Kampf zwischen dem gemeinen Menschen-Verstande des sich selbst noch nicht vollkommen begreifenden unmittelbaren Selbstbewußtsein mit der gleichfalls noch unvollendeten Speculation, bis zum zeitlichen Siege des erstern über die letztere* ('New struggle between the common sense of the immediate self-consciousness, which does not entirely understand itself yet, and the speculation which is likewise still incomplete up to the temporary victory of the first over the second'): the second half of the eighteenth century (pp. 115–282); *Dritte Epoche. Neueste Umbildung und Vollendung der Philosophie als Wissenschaft, beginnend mit Kant und seither glücklich fortschreitend* ('Latest transformation and accomplishment of philosophy as a science, starting with Kant and then proceeding productively': pp. 283–510). The work closes with an *Anhang über den Zustand der wissenschaftlichen oder speculativen Philosophie ausser Deutschland im*

christlichen Europa (pp. 511–526), that is, an appendix containing additional information on the state of philosophy outside Germany. The third volume therefore lacks the final excerpts, which are replaced by an extensive use of quotations in the original language interspersed throughout the account.

3.2.4.2 Besides the ordinary systems of periodisation, such as chronology and geographic location, Rixner also uses theoretical categories such as ‘idealism’ and ‘realism’, or ‘monism’ (“doctrine of the One-Whole”) and ‘dualism’. He begins by putting forward the hypothesis of an age characterised by the “unity of the original life which is still incapable of reflecting upon itself” (I, p. 11), that is to say, a golden age corresponding to the primitive religion of Asia, which, from a philosophical point of view, presents itself as the doctrine of the One-Whole (*All-Einslehre*). From this primitive religion there subsequently derived, as its superior unities, realistic polytheism, idealistic monotheism, and finally the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In this first period of his history, man did not possess any science, but only imagination and rational instinct. The second period, symbolically identified as external or real “element of life” (*Element des Lebens*), is represented by the age of the Greeks and the Romans. The philosophy of the Middle Ages or Scholasticism belongs to the third period, the epoch of the “spirit which comes back from the intuition of nature (*Natur-Anschauung*) to self-reflection (*Selbst-Betrachtung*)”. In this period, the ideal element of life prevails over the real element. Finally, the fourth period is an epoch characterised by harmony between these elements, that is, between external and internal life. The philosophy of this period, namely the philosophy of the modern age, as a science of reason comprehending itself, also extinguishes the conflict which had lasted up to then between idealism and realism, in favour of a superior unity.

These theoretical categories also hold within the greater epochs. Hence, in ancient Oriental philosophy, after an initial chapter concerning the Indian thought of the Veda, a further subdivision of the *Urphilosophie* or original philosophy is made on the basis of the “ideal” and “real” elements in the second and third chapter respectively: *Ausgeburten des idealen Elements des Orientalismus* (Tibetan mysticism, Chinese philosophy, Japanese philosophy, and Buddhism) and *Ausgeburten des realen Elements des Orientalismus* (Persian philosophy, the cosmogonies of the Sidonians, Phoenicians, Chaldeans, and Hebrews, Egyptian natural religion, and the *Edda* of the Scandinavians). The subdivision of Greek philosophy into four epochs reveals the systematic distinction between dualism and monism, that is to say, between idealism and realism, implying the possibility of elaborating a synthesis. Hence, the first epoch is the age of myth (Orpheus and the Seven Sages), the second and third epochs manifest respectively a realism (with Thales, the founder of scientific philosophy, and then Anaximander and Heraclitus) and an idealism (with Pythagoras, the “Eleatic dialectic”, and the atomists). It is perhaps surprising that the latter are placed within idealism, but this is due to a “superior” logical perspective that interprets the derivation of multiplicity from unity as a form of methodological idealism. It is only in the fourth epoch (Sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Epicureans) that the identity of realism and idealism is assured.

With the tendency towards the dissolution of "Attic philosophy" under the influence of Epicurus, the cycle had begun with mythical Chaos and the enquiry into natural philosophy ends. By adopting these metaphysical criteria, Rixner also applies his circular model to other moments of the history of philosophy and, like Ast, starts from the phases of transition of individual dualisms to arrive at cycles and epicycles which are more and more rigorously delimited.

Medieval philosophy is divided into Scholasticism, mystical theology, and a later phase of transition to the modern age. Scholasticism is further subdivided into two epochs: the first starts in the sixth century with Isidore of Seville, ends in the twelfth century with Peter Lombard, and is characterised by theology; the second concerns Arabic philosophy from the eighth to the twelfth century (al-Farabi, Avicenna, al-Ghazālī, Averroes, and others) and the Scholastics from the tenth to the sixteenth century (such as Alan of Lille, John Duns Scotus, Raymond Lull, William of Ockham, Walter Burleigh, and Francisco Suárez). The mystical theology of the Middle Ages (John Scotus Eriugena, Bernard of Clairvaux, Bonaventure, and others) is in marked contrast to Scholasticism. Indeed, as it is a "theoretical and practical introduction to the union with God" (II, p. 172), it manifests an epochal opposition to Scholasticism. Different epochs of mystical theology are outlined: the theological and biblical, the Platonic and cabbalistic, and the alchemistic and theosophical.

The ancient dualism of Platonism and Aristotelianism, which comes to light in the distinction between mystical theology and Scholasticism, performs an important role in the description of these tendencies. By recourse to this periodisation, Rixner can extend the phase of transition from the Middle Ages to the modern age, including in the final part of the second volume a series of thinkers who fall at the beginnings of modernity. This phase of transition is subdivided into three periods. The first includes the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and deals with Dante, Boccaccio, Gemistus Plethon, George Trapezuntius, Bessarion, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and others, and here too draws a distinction between the classical and the mystical tendency. The second period (the sixteenth century) includes anti-Scholastic Aristotelians like Pietro Pomponazzi, Luis Vives, Melancthon, Petrus Ramus, and Zabarella; mystics revealing a cabbalistic inspiration like Johannes Reuchlin, Agrippa of Nettesheim, and Paracelsus; "syncretists" of a scientific and mystical orientation like Girolamo Cardano, Julius Caesar Scaliger, Bernardino Telesio, Francesco Patrizi, and Giordano Bruno; and finally Montaigne and Charron viewed as modern sceptics. The third period deals with writers from the first half of the seventeenth century too (Andrea Cesalpino, Nicolaus Taurellus, Vanini, Cremonini, Francisco Sánchez, Francis Bacon, Justus Lipsius, Pierre Gassendi, and others). This group is contrasted with the mystics and theosophists Jacob Böhme, Robert Fludd, and Kenelm Digby. The new syncretists, in turn, attempted to unite religiosity and the empirical science of nature (Campanella, Johann Baptist and Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont), thus anticipating tendencies prevailing in the Enlightenment, the description of which, however, is kept for the third volume.

As we have seen, in the third volume the periodisation of modern and contemporary philosophy is extremely diversified. Here chronology is more important than

the systematic subdivisions used so far. The first epoch includes the second half of the seventeenth century and the beginnings of the eighteenth and deals with the Enlightenment or “earthly philosophy” (*Weltweisheit*): Bacon, John Barclay, Richard Cumberland, Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes, Samuel Pufendorf, as well as Descartes and Spinoza together with their followers and opponents. There follows a presentation of the mystical and sceptical tendencies, which are considered to be reactions against the Enlightenment tendencies of an empiricist and rationalistic orientation: Pascal, Malebranche, Pierre Poiret, Daniel Huet, Pierre Bayle, Theophile and Thomas Gale, Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, Samuel Parker, Johann Engel, and Hieronymus Hirnhaim. Similarly, the second epoch (the second half of the eighteenth century) saw a conflict between common sense and speculative philosophy, scepticism, and mystical theology. Here national differences also emerged with respect to philosophical positions (empirical realism and *common sense* in England, speculative philosophy and dogmatic school tendencies in Germany). Empiricism, with its sensationalistic and sceptical elements, won a short victory over the speculative tendencies and manifested itself in, among others, Condillac, Charles Bonnet, La Mettrie, Diderot, d’Alembert, Helvétius, Voltaire, Rousseau, Mendelssohn, Lessing, Hemsterhuis, Hume, Thomas Reid, Adam Smith, and Adam Ferguson.

The third epoch, finally, is devoted to contemporary German thought, starting from Kant and his disciples and critics (Fichte, Krug, Fries, Calker, and others). For Rixner, like Schelling, the last part of this epoch constitutes the “Fulfilment of philosophy as an absolute science comprehending itself” (III, pp. 368–392). There follows a detailed description of the influence exercised and the criticism aroused by Schelling’s philosophy (Gottlob Ernst Schulze, Friedrich Köppen, Cajetan Weiller, Adam Karl August Eschenmayer, Franz Berg, Johann Jacob Wagner, Heinrich Steffens, Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler, Karl Ludwig Haller, Johann Josua Stutzmann, Georg Michael Klein, Johann Baptist Schad, Friedrich Ast, Johann Erich von Berger, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Solger, Immanuel Hermann Fichte, and Karl Christian Friedrich Krause). Without further comment, Rixner then presents the separate parts of Hegel’s absolute philosophy, associating it with Schelling’s philosophy under the title ‘Words of reproach and criticism recently made regarding Schelling and Hegel’s systems’ (III, pp. 441–447). These passages concerning Hegel seem rather extraneous to a treatment of other Schellingians characterised by their philosophical and natural, ethical, or mystical orientation (Franz von Baader, Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert, Lorenz Oken, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Johann Friedrich von Meyer, etc.); yet, this demonstrates that, in Rixner’s time, Hegel was still entirely interpreted within the framework of the Schellingian tradition. With Meyer, Schelling’s youngest follower, philosophy turned again to mysticism: in the eyes of Rixner, the circular course of contemporary thought is thus completed.

3.2.4.3 Rixner distinguishes between two forms of Oriental philosophy: the first is produced by imagination, myths, and poetry, the second by the ideas of reason and by philosophy. Both moments manifest themselves on one hand in a “real” manner, that is, by taking the form of a mythology of fire, stars, and animals (the Persians and the Egyptians) and, on the other hand, in an “ideal” manner, that is, by taking

the form of a contemplative and ethical existence in Tibetan and Chinese thought. Oriental philosophy instead reaches the supreme fulfilment of its real element in the aesthetic polytheism of the Greeks and the Romans.

Referring to Schelling's *Über die Gottheiten von Samothrake* (Stuttgart, 1815), Rixner considers the different elements of Greek philosophy in analogy to the evolution of Oriental philosophy. Hence, within the framework of the division into four periods, Platonism marks the fulfilment of Greek philosophy, in which the elements of idealism and realism are joined (I, pp. 44–45). Only Attic philosophy, to which Plato and Aristotle belong, represents an epoch of "accomplished science" (*vollendeter Wissenschaft*); but here too a new "dissolution" becomes evident (I, p. 265): Socrates' ethics determines the appearance of Cynicism and Cyrenaic philosophy, Platonism gives rise to the opposed positions of "enthusiasm" and "acatalepsy" (or *scopsis*), and finally Aristotelianism is responsible for producing Stoicism and Epicureanism.

Rixner explains the eclecticism of Roman philosophy as a result of the excessive intensification of practical life (I, p. 342). Although he judges the most ancient forms of eclecticism negatively, he appreciates its expression in late Antiquity, since it gave rise to Christianity as its "transfigured creation" (*verklärte Schöpfung*). He justifies this point of view by noting that Christianity is aware of knowing only an indivisible truth, a theory which is indicative of the concept of philosophy elaborated by Rixner and the ideas of the Schellingians on the whole.

In the Middle Ages, religion constituted the object of reflection of every thinker, although the form of these reflections changed in relation to their mystical or dialectic orientation. Within the dialectic tendency, Rixner dwells on nominalism, although he considers it to be a closed subject from a theoretical point of view. As for mysticism, it should not only be regarded as the opposite tendency to Scholasticism, but "in general as the adversary of unilateral and soulless speculation", a theory which is also significant in the context of Rixner's interpretation of modern philosophical currents (II, pp. 172–73). In the transition from the Middle Ages to the new epoch, both moments – dogmatic Scholasticism and nonconceptual mysticism – were to develop in favour of the supreme task of philosophy as a rational science, which was by now free, autonomous, and universal (II, p. 193). Rixner points out the fact that the religious spirit of the Middle Ages continued to exist uninterrupted during the period of the Renaissance, and even the pagan poetical world was integrated by means of allegorical interpretation, as is clear in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

As for the general history of humanity, Rixner sees the political beginning of the modern age in the peace of Westphalia. As was customary, the beginning of modern philosophy is traced back to Bacon and Descartes. From the very beginning, Descartes' philosophy is presented and discussed in a decidedly critical fashion, from an idealistic point of view. Because of his subjectivism, Descartes did not excel in scientific audacity or in philosophical speculation (III, p. 31). Rixner agrees with Schelling that all philosophy of reflection makes the fundamental mistake of claiming that the immediate certainty of one's self is something absolutely

independent (III, pp. 35–36).³⁵ Besides criticising the Cartesian philosophy of reflection, Rixner also points out that Descartes was more convincing as a mathematician than as a philosopher, and that “perhaps [...] it was precisely the mathematician who frequently misled the philosopher” (III, p. 34).

In the subsequent evolution of Cartesian ontology, Spinoza elaborated a pantheistic doctrine through his concept of substance. Malebranche developed the other element of Cartesianism, the knowledge of thought, in a mystical direction, whereby authentic knowledge is identified as the vision of things in God. Leibniz’s monadology represented the union of these doctrines, in so far as the intuition of reason is reconciled with the concept of the intellect (III, p. 57). Rixner summarises and, in a paragraph devoted to criticism of Spinoza’s system, compares the latter to Fichte and Schelling, his “spiritual brothers” in contemporary philosophy. In this perspective, Spinoza’s philosophy is objective and realistic, whereas Fichte’s doctrine of the self is subjective and idealistic; only Schelling’s philosophy of identity, which constitutes the superior unity of the two previous systems, is the living doctrine of the one-whole (III, pp. 79–80). For Rixner, the placing of Leibniz in this context is complex because, on one hand, his philosophy constitutes the peak of the second epoch of the modern age, in which a battle is waged between common sense (in the name of empirical realism) and speculative philosophy, but, on the other, it is only an intermediate stage in relation to the science of reason which tends towards its fulfilment. Indeed, neither common sense nor speculative reason have been able to effectively oppose the phenomena of the decline of materialism, sensationalism, scepticism, or atheism (pp. 115–116). Furthermore, before his work was popularised by Wolff, Leibniz had not exercised any real influence in the domain of philosophical science (III, pp. 116–117). Rixner appreciates, however, his defence of materialism and lack of religiosity, although he then criticises the absence of systematicity in his thought (III, pp. 145–146 and 180–181).

After Leibniz’ death, the idea of a philosophical science was increasingly disregarded: this applies less to German eclecticism, however, than to England and France, which are viewed as countries hostile to metaphysics. Rixner makes an even more radical condemnation of atheistic trends or trends that are critical to religion, which were spread in particular by Bayle’s *Dictionnaire* and the *Encyclopédie*. Along with his vigorous rejection of the Enlightenment trends of thought, Rixner’s criticism of Friedrich Nicolai’s *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* (1765–1812) can even be described as destructive. In contrast to Lessing, whose vast learning and moral fibre are praised, Mendelssohn is reproached for his intellectual narrowness, which manifested itself in the early phase of his contribution to the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, although Rixner does subsequently recognize that Mendelssohn showed “greater competence” with reference to his Spinozism (III, p. 238).

³⁵ In this regard, Rixner refers to a passage from Schelling’s *Aus den Jahrbüchern der Medicin als Wissenschaft* (1806): “[...] Thought is not my thought, and being is not my being, since everything is only of God or of the Whole” (*Werke*, IV, p. 82). But Rixner adds: “Without nevertheless ceasing to be mine too” (III, p. 36).

For Rixner, the fulfilment of philosophy as a science in the contemporary period is related to Kant, who tried to overcome sophistry and scepticism. However, from his perspective as a late idealist, and more precisely as a Schellingian, Rixner maintains that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is governed by a non-reconciled spirit, because it simply claims the idea of reason in a "very naive" way, and the system threatens to "kill" the idea itself (III, p. 288). Other critical observations are formulated with respect to Kant's practical philosophy, which is in a way only an appendix to his theoretical philosophy. Rixner also reproaches Kant's ethics for its formalism (II, pp. 306–307).

For Rixner, only Fichte's philosophy of absolute subjectivity represents a further development to the fulfilment of the doctrine of science. He believes that Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte agree in granting man an autonomous reality outside God, thus providing an absolute determination of the finite and the infinite to equal extent. As for the concept of God, the three systems differ from one another because according to Kant, God is unknowable and problematic; for Jacobi, God is merely believed or perceived; and according to Fichte, God is a "nonSelf = Self" which is "absolutely ideal" (III, pp. 339–340). These conceptions of God, seen in relation to the philosophy of identity, which Rixner shares with Schelling, are prisoners to subjectivity. The negative consequences of Kant's formalism, in turn, brought about realistic reactions in Bardili, Bouterwek, Krug, Fries, Calker, Herbart, and Ernst Reinhold (III, p. 352).

All these different positions, which in the light of Rixner's need for the fulfilment of philosophy still appear insufficient, are finally overcome with Schelling. The fulfilment of philosophy consists in its being understood as a science. This happens by solving the perennial task of bringing idealism close to realism and of demonstrating "the divine *natura naturans* in the absolute origin of all things". Only in this way can philosophy "return to its primitive original unity" (III, p. 369).

With regard to Bernard Heinrich Blasche's criticism of Schelling from the point of view of experimental physics, Rixner admits that Schelling's strength manifested itself more on a metaphysical plane, that is, "in the pure philosophy of the absolute, of the common basis of ideal and real philosophy, rather than in the applied philosophy of concrete reality and of nature". With equal clarity Rixner considers the failed accomplishment of the Schellingian project to be the chief cause of the controversial state of absolute philosophy or the philosophy of identity, and its misinterpretations in the Schellingian school (III, pp. 395–396). However, this overall judgement does not prevent Rixner, after mentioning the various adversaries of absolute philosophy, from distinguishing between the followers who were superficial repeaters and those who were real perfecters, and from identifying them in relation to the specific discipline cultivated (III, p. 405). As for Hegel, whose encyclopaedic tendency allows us to place him among the Schellingians who were interested in several fields of study, Rixner prefers the definition "absolute philosophy" to "philosophy of identity" (III, p. 442). Thus Rixner expands the criteria for defining the schools, taking into consideration every tendency which, within German idealism, went beyond Kant. This explains why Fichte and Hegel are included among the perfecters of the Schellingian perspective.

In the appendix 'On the State of Scientific or Speculative Philosophy in Christian Europe outside Germany', Rixner finally discusses the question of whether and to what extent original and independent ideas arose abroad. In Italy, no original thinker emerged after the time of Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella, and Antonio Genovesi himself was fundamentally an eclectic (III, pp. 510–511). Rixner observes that, on a scientific plane, Spain reveals its backwardness and lack of freedom (III, p. 514). Charles Villers's attempt to introduce transcendental philosophy in France failed not only because of his lack of ability, but also because of the predominance of Lockean empiricism. Far from what the *idéologie* of Destutt de Tracy might have us suppose, these theories are nothing other than empirical psychology. On the other hand, the French are hardly interested in the terminology of the German philosophy of nature and cultivate astronomy in a mechanistic sense (III, pp. 516–520). As for English philosophy, Rixner points out its marked inclination to pragmatism but rejoices at the fact that in England the name philosophy has never been used for "anything hideous", as unfortunately happened in Germany (III, pp. 522–523).

3.2.4.4 As is clear from the analysis elaborated so far, the method used by Rixner is inspired by the idea of an organism and is understood as rational research that develops according to certain laws. Although the contents of the history of philosophy are conceived of as a revelation of the spirit, and although philosophy as an ideal structure is unitary and eternal, in its concrete forms it exists in a manifold and contingent way. This opposition between the unitary *philosophia perennis* and the "temporal forms" (*zeitlichen Formen*) of the history of philosophy, which are expressed in various systems and conceptions, must be examined by the historian who must try to overcome it through his work. The individual systems of doctrines must be presented in such a way that their mutual influences and dependences – as well as their common derivation from original revealed philosophy – become visible (I, pp. 3–5).

In order to restore this original connection, the description of the history of philosophy must conform to four "fundamental laws" (*Grundgesetze*) which enable the treatment to be organic, harmonious, speculative, and poetical. First of all, this type of history must be presented "organically": it "appears like an organism completed in itself", so as to show the living cognitive process, that is, the dynamics of the unfolding of knowledge (p. 6). Secondly, the treatment must appear "harmonious" in demonstrating how specific formal oppositions (the finite and the infinite, the ideal and the real, being and phenomenon), "from the viewpoint of reason", ultimately form unities. This observation also applies to the individual philosophies, which are all joined in "only one central point". Thirdly, the history of philosophy must be dealt with "speculatively", that is to say, as a real philosophy. Rixner refers here to the evaluation elaborated with respect to perennial philosophy, of partial concepts which can be subordinated to specific conditions characterising an epoch or a milieu. Fourthly, the treatment has to be "poetical", as it is a description of the history of philosophy as a spiritual history, the "Iliad and Odyssey of the human spirit", in other words, a fatal development which was able to reach its objectives only because it was governed by a cosmic reason (p. 7).

In a note, Rixner then clearly defines the conditions for a good history of philosophy as far as the contents are concerned: the theoretical positions should arise from reliable sources, they should be authentic and complete, and they should be cited chronologically and placed in their natural context. Moreover, doctrines should also "be important for a knowledge of the origin and development of philosophy as a science" (p. 8). The prerequisite requiring doctrines, and hence historical data, to be of importance for the overall development of philosophy determines the choice of subject, whereas its completeness had previously been considered decisive. Although Rixner's fundamental methodological laws seem at first sight to be global or too general, they do provide a differentiation that enables him to avoid the extremes of a restricted description of the exhaustiveness of the history of philosophy and the restriction of the treatment to a few major classics with reference to Schleiermacher's hermeneutics.

What is truly noteworthy is the fact that Rixner was able to unite the idea of progress of Kantian origin to the Schellingian theme of decline. The idea of progress concerns the rational development of the human spirit, whereas the idea of decline concerns the conceptual structures, which become increasingly differentiated and complex starting from the original doctrine of unitotality: in this context, monistic perspectives are viewed as positive, and dualistic ones as the "irreconcilable" (*unversöhnt*) negative ones. Progress is also identified as a growing elevation of consciousness, in relation to the development of science and reflection on human knowledge itself. The idea of decline, on the other hand, acquires a mystical connotation in Rixner's conceptual model of the development of consciousness because the starting point is the necessary departure from a golden age and an equally necessary overcoming of the original doctrines of unitotality.

In order to understand such extremely general conceptual structures from a historiographical point of view, Rixner followed Schelling and relied on polarities and oppositions of a metaphysical or methodological kind. But, unlike for Hegel, the resulting syntheses are rare and in many cases the oppositions simply coexist side by side. Not all these regulating perspectives operate in the same way, however, but become key issues with reference to specific epochs. For this reason, the opposition between the doctrine of unitotality and the particularistic theories manifests itself especially in Antiquity, even though it permeates the entire history of philosophy. The philosophy of the Indians, for instance, like Spinozism and Schelling's system, are viewed as doctrines of unitotality which undergo various modifications in the period after their advent, thus involving the loss of the original unity.

Idealism and realism, which represent further bipolar aspects, are used for characterising Oriental and ancient thought to a much greater extent than the opposition between the doctrine of unitotality and particularism or pluralism. According to Rixner, the origin of the various forms of the ideal and real element that are present in Orientalism lies in the doctrine of unitotality in original Indian philosophy, which was preserved in the succession of different Oriental peoples. In addition to the opposites involved in the formation of principles (monism and pluralism) and those present on a metaphysical plane (idealism and realism), Rixner also admits the existence of opposites in relation to the attitude towards science. In the philosophy of

the Middle Ages these were mystical theology and Scholasticism, and in the philosophy of the modern age, empirics and speculation.

One may easily conclude that, with the help of such a universal and wide-ranging schematization, Rixner is not only able to place each phenomenon and theory within the frame of the history of philosophy and the spirit in relation to the general intellectual attitude, but also to define their mutual relationship. This applies above all to those positions which can be explained only by means of particular mixed forms, or forms of transition of polarities. Hence, what distinguishes the positive character of "Attic philosophy" is precisely the fact that it unites old realism and the idealism of his predecessors. However, this Attic blend of metaphysical perspectives is still far from the really harmonising synthesis carried out by Schelling's philosophy.

In the eyes of Rixner, the bipolar perspectives and the four "fundamental laws" constitute the theoretical basis for interpreting the history of philosophy, whereas direct and reliable sources constitute the material basis for carrying out research. The fact that Rixner gives great importance to authentic tradition and an appropriate theoretical analysis is shown by his meticulous and detailed account of the individual philosophical systems, which he usually subdivides into fields of study. It is therefore not by chance that, in the title of his lengthy presentation of Schelling, Rixner declares that the text is structured "following the original description written by the author himself" (III, p. 371). The attention given to the original text represents therefore an essential aspect of the method not only in the global interpretation of the history of philosophy, but also in the use of direct sources. Rixner, for example, is aware of the fact that all research into the history of Greek thought is based for the most part on indirect information, and he does not conceal his caution when confronted with certain original sources.

In accordance with this methodological sensitivity, Rixner accompanies his analysis of currents and philosophical doctrines and the theoretical understanding of the history of philosophy with precise quotations and veritable anthologies of texts. In this regard, the 'Appendix of documentary supplements' contained in both volumes can be considered to be an early and practical illustration of Schopenhauer's ideal of a history of philosophy as chrestomathy. Rixner's organization of the material is considerable, and the parallel arrangement of texts in their original language and their German translation must be considered pioneering in the field of the historiography of philosophy.

To summarise, we can say that Rixner proceeded with great care in his use of the material available to him and he always succeeded in making it speak, whether through paraphrase, quotations, or excerpts. The simple chronological structure is surpassed by the speculative vision of the historical dimension. The organic method, which Rixner considered to be the first fundamental methodological law, reunites the idea of the growth and autonomy of the organism of the history of philosophy with the causal and the teleological perspectives. Rixner viewed the history of philosophy as something autonomous and organic, in which certain elements arise, mature, then regress again in favour of new elements. These elements, consisting of polarities and oppositions, have a dynamic character, which is also functional to the succession of systems, and operate as nodal points interrelated analogically. Hence, owing to the analogies in the development of philosophy, we can speak in Rixner's

case of a philosophy of history underlying his history of philosophy, an attitude in perfect harmony with the reflections made at the beginning of the *Handbuch* concerning the relationship between the history of philosophy and the history of humanity (I, pp.11–12).

3.2.5 On the whole Rixner's activity and works on philosophy and the history of philosophy had a limited influence. However, the biographies of the philosophers of nature from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries edited by Rixner together with Thaddäus Siber attracted more attention than might be thought, not least because of the considerable amount of quotations they contain. The historian of science August Heller, for example, used these works for his *Geschichte der Physik von Aristoteles bis auf die neueste Zeit*, 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1882–1884), and Richard Falckenberg derived some information concerning the Italian philosophers of nature from them (*Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1927) [first edition: Leipzig, 1886], pp. 30–36).

As for the *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, it was criticised in a review of first volume published in the *Allgemeines Repertorium der neuesten in- und ausländischen Literatur für 1823*, Vol. I, I. Stück (Leipzig, 1823), to which Rixner readily responded with a 'Vorbericht' included in volume III of the *Handbuch* (1823: pp. III–IV). The fundamental criticism alleged that Rixner conceived of philosophy as something complete and that his work was too vast to be used as a textbook for schools. Rixner rejected the first observation by referring to the distinction between ideal element and real element, which had been put forward in §§ 5–6 of his introduction to the *Handbuch*. Only philosophy as something ideal is seen as eternal and is thus grasped in its unity. For Rixner, therefore, that which is completed in itself is *philosophia perennis* and not, as the reviewer believed, its particular historical manifestations. As concerns the second reproach, the work's prolixity, Rixner paid little attention to this remark because he believed that it was possible to use his manual – which was particularly intended for teaching – “choosing from it, year by year, new paradigms corresponding to the individual philosophical genres” (p. III).

The *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie* was received by Hegel with unexpectedly positive words. He mentioned it besides other summaries of the history of philosophy, declaring that Rixner's contribution was “the most recommendable” of the works, and then observed:

“Yet I will not assert that it answers all the requirements of a history of philosophy. There are many points which leave much to desire, but the appendices to each volume in which the principal original authorities are quoted, are particularly excellent for their purpose. Selected extracts [*Chrestomatien*], more specially from the ancient philosophers, are needed, and these would not be lengthy, since there are not very many passages to be given from the philosophers before Plato”.³⁶

³⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, transl. by E.S. Haldane and F.H. Simson (London, 1892–1896), Vol. I, p. 114.

These words of praise are noteworthy not only because they were pronounced by Hegel, but principally because they gave rise to further judgements on Rixner's work. Johann Eduard Erdmann wrote that Rixner's work became widespread thanks in particular to Hegel's recommendation. According to Erdmann, Rixner contributed to paving the way for the doctrines of the system of identity, but he also expressed an unexpected doubt, after the approval of Hegel, concerning the lack of profundity in Rixner's historiographical works (*Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Darstellung*, II, pp. 234 and 388). Eduard Zeller's criticism of the *Handbuch*, on the other hand, was decidedly harsher. Referring to Rixner's general conception of historiography, Zeller made the pertinent comment that it was elaborated by following the same plan as that used by Ast. As for the first volume (on ancient philosophy) he even defined Rixner's work as a piece of plagiarism, documenting his judgement with parallel excerpts (Zeller, pp. 27–28).

The existence of concordant points is undisputable, but their weight appears to be exaggerated. Zeller may have been influenced by the rather critical review of Rixner's other work on the history of philosophy, the *Geschichte der Philosophie bei den Katholiken in Altbayern, bayerisch Schwaben und bayerisch Franken* (1835). This review starts polemically by questioning whether it is worth conducting research into the philosophical activity of the Catholics in these German regions, with the reviewer believing that Rixner conducted his task superficially as his work provided nothing but the names of the professors of philosophy and mathematics who taught at the various universities, gymnasiums, and conventual schools in Bavaria, Swabia, and Franconia. Since the historical span of Rixner's account extended from the end of the fifteenth century up to the present time, the reviewer complained above all of the lack of a careful description of the present state of philosophy, "in which at least Bavaria is entitled to be considered as the centre of a new sea of light thanks to the presence of Schelling". Moreover, the reviewer did not even believe that Rixner's account deserved "the inferior rank of a bibliographical reference work", because of its incompleteness and lack of precision (*RGDL*, 1836, Bd. 7, Heft 3, pp. 214–216). In turn Wilhelm Traugott Krug reports in his philosophical lexicon (1838) the fundamental criticism expressed by the anonymous review of this work, in which it is defined as "a compilation – lacking intelligence and superficial – of names, dates, and titles of books" (*Allgemeines Handwörterbuch*, V, pp. 241–242). This reproach fails to recognize Rixner's bibliographical work, whose merit consists in having presented the intellectual production of Bavaria for the first time in a historical survey. Victor Philipp Gumposch, who probably knew Rixner personally as a result of the period he spent in Munich, also believed that "he damaged himself [...] above all with his imprecise *Geschichte der Philosophie in Altbayern*" (Gumposch, p. 507).

As for the intellectual influences predominant in Rixner, there are discordant opinions. Krug saw an evolution from Schelling to Hegel (*Allgemeines Handwörterbuch*, III, p. 540). What probably impressed Krug in Rixner's *Aphorismen* was the passage quoted from Hegel's *Phenomenology* as well as the title given to a section of the work: 'Die Phänomenologie des Geistes, oder wissenschaftliche Selbstkunde' (ed. 1818, I, pp. 45–124). As for the history of philosophy,

Krug probably mistook the organic teleological account of a Schellingian type for the Hegelian method of dialectic progression. Krug's view that Rixner's early Schellingian leanings were subsequently replaced by the influence of Hegel, was accepted by, among others, Ludwig Noack (*Philosophiegeschichtliches Lexikon*, Leipzig, 1879, p. 742) and Ueberweg (IV, pp. 58–59).

We find a different attitude, however, in the historian of philosophy Karl Biedermann and the historian of logic Karl von Prantl, who was the author of an article on Rixner in the *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*. Biedermann placed Rixner unreservedly in the broad current of the Schellingian school: "[...] and some others, for example Troxler, Windischmann [...], Rixner [...], concern themselves with specific parts of the system of identity, adhering more or less rigorously to Schelling's principles" (*Die deutsche Philosophie von Kant bis auf unsere Zeit* (Leipzig, 1842), II, p. 230). As for Prantl, he identified the clear presence of Schelling in the *Aphorismen* and mentioned Rixner's attendance of Schelling's lessons in Munich (ADB, XXVIII, p. 716). Finally, not without reservation, Richard Falckenberg declared that: "Only Georg Michael Klein [...], Stutzmann [...], and the historians of philosophy Ast and Rixner can be defined as Schellingians" (*Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, p. 439). The fact that Rixner was placed in the school of Hegel or Schelling shows that his position between these speculative systems is open to interpretation. In this regard, we should also note the position still prevailing in the first half of the nineteenth century, whereby Hegel was understood on the basis of the fundamental elements of Schelling's philosophy. As for the historiography of philosophy in particular, however, Rixner's Schellingian inspiration remains undisputed.

3.2.6 On Rixner's life and works: Meusel, XV, pp. 178–179; XIX, p. 381; *Neuer Nekrolog der Deutschen*, ed. by A. Schmidt and B.F. Voigt, Jg. 16 (1838) (Ilmenau and Weimar, 1840), p. 195; W.T. Krug, *Allgemeines Handwörterbuch der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, vol. III (Leipzig, 1833), p. 540; V=Suppl., II/2 (Leipzig, 1838), pp. 241–242; Gumposch, pp. 506–507; ADB, XXVIII, pp. 715–716; L. Noack, *Philosophiegeschichtliches Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1879), p. 742; A. Lindner, *Die Schriftsteller und die um Wissenschaft und Kunst verdienten Mitglieder des Benediktiner-Ordens im heutigen Königreich Bayern vom Jahre 1750 bis zur Gegenwart*, II (Regensburg, 1880); Ueberweg, IV, pp. 58–59; W. Ziegenfuss and G. Jung, *Philosophen-Lexikon. Handwörterbuch der Philosophie nach Personen* (Berlin, 1949–1950), vol. II, p. 363; M. Kaufmann, *Säkularisation, Desolation und Restauration in der Benediktinerabtei Metten (1830–1840)* (Metten, 1993), pp. 21–24 and 200–202; Id., 'Anselm Rixner (1766–1838). Autobiographie', *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige*, CXXII (2011), pp. 481–499; M. Knedlik, 'Rixner, Anselm', in *Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. XXIII (Nordhausen, 2004), pp. 1197–1200.

On his works on the history of philosophy: ARNAL, I (1823), I. Stück; RGD, VII (1836), Heft 3, pp. 214–216; G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in *Werke*, ed. by E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel (Frankfurt a.M., 1969–1971), XVIII, p. 136; J.E. Erdmann, *Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen*

Darstellung der Geschichte der neuern Philosophie (Riga and Leipzig, 1834–1853; repr. Stuttgart, 1931–1934), II, pp. 234 and 388; Gumposch, p. 507; Zeller, pp. 27–28; Geldsetzer, p. 93; Braun, p. 303 (note 78); D. von Engelhardt, ‘Paracelsus im Urteil der Naturforschung und Medizin der Romantik’, *International Journal of History & Ethics of Natural Sciences, Technology & Medicine*, II (1994), pp. 97–116; K.G. Witz, *The Supreme Wisdom of the Upanisads. An Introduction* (Delhi, 1998), p. 55 note; Park, *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy*, pp. 97–111; N. Strok, ‘Eriugena’s pantheism. Brucker, Tennemann, and Rixner’s reading of *Periphyseon*’, *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, LVII (2015), pp. 105–123; Ead., ‘*Vera philosophia, vera religio. De praedestinatione* de Juan Escoto Eriúgena y su recepción en las historias de la filosofía de Brucker, Tennemann y Rixner’, *Philosophia* [Mendoza], LXXV (2015), 1, pp. 61–85; Ead., ‘Meister Eckart en la historiographía filosófica moderna’, *Princípios. Revista de filosofia* [Natal], XXII, n. 37 (2015), pp. 141–157; G. Amengual Coll, *Afines por elección. En torno a los inicios de la Modernidad en España. Llull, Lutero, Teresa de Jesús, Spinoza y Hegel* (Madrid, 2018), p. 15 note; H. del Estal Sánchez, ‘*Ornithoryncus Paradoxus*: la recepción de la filosofía de Arthur Schopenhauer entre 1818 y 1848’, *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía*, XXXV (2018), 1, pp. 127–156: 139; C. König-Pralong, ‘How Historians of Philosophy Invented Europe’s Philosophical Nature’, in *The Territories of Philosophy in Modern Historiography*. ed. by C. König-Pralong, M. Meliadó, and Z. Radeva (Turnhout and Bari, 2019), pp. 19–38: 24–25; C. Muratori, ‘Science or “Sad Trash”? Aristotelian Lineages in the Historiography of Animal Magnetism’, *ibid.*, pp. 203–222: 213–214.

Chapter 3

The History of Philosophy and Dialectic: Hegel



Giovanni Santinello

Introduction

Hegel's historiographical work falls in the middle of a productive period in which a number of large works were created, including both general histories of philosophy and theoretical dissertations on historiographical themes. This period – covering the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first thirty years of the nineteenth – was perhaps unprecedented for the well-balanced combination of theory and practice in the field of the historiography of philosophy, a legacy of the erudition and lights of reason rooted in the eighteenth century. Hegel himself did not fail to mention the philological antecedents of the Enlightenment and the many works produced in his own period. The final part of the *Einleitung* to his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, which is devoted to “sources and literature”, contains his verdict on Stanley and Brucker's works, on the work of Tiedemann, Buhle, and Tennemann, and a reference to the more recent compendia by Ast, Tennemann (revised and updated by A. Wendt), and Rixner. But, for Hegel, all these historiographical works suffered from their excessive erudition and a lack of true philosophical understanding. Hegel was somewhat indiscriminate and failed to distinguish between the Wolffian phase (Brucker) and the Kantian phase (Tennemann), which was certainly more speculatively oriented. He sometimes acknowledged that some valuable information had been provided, but believed it was unnecessary to linger over the underlying theoretical premises.

Brucker, however, had prefaced his *Historia critica* with a long ‘Dissertatio praeliminaris’ and Heumann before him, in his *Acta Philosophorum*, had not failed to state the need for *historia philosophica* to be handed on from pure historians and philologists to philosophers. The theory they shared was eclecticism, a pugnacious rather than pacifying eclecticism, which did not particularly emphasise choice and reconciliation but significantly accentuated the exercise of freedom implicit in

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choice, the discovery of the new, the lack of sectarianism and authoritarianism in the different tendencies, and the progress of the modern as opposed to the ancient.

The following Kantian age, in Germany above all, produced the richest and most profound theoretical reflection. Kant, certainly not a historian by profession, showed a great sensitivity to the “history of pure reason”; his unpublished writings include many historiographical notes – which he did not intend to develop – which trace the sequence of ‘systems’ within a general history of thought and also contain his reflections on the very concept of the ‘history of philosophy’. How can historical knowledge have the necessity of scientific knowledge if its subject can only be given empirically *a posteriori*? It should be possible to develop a sort of “historical *a priori*” if we consider the particular nature of the *facta* which constitute the history of philosophy, that is, that they are *facta der Vernunft*. The only *a priori* part of this history is the “schema”, a “simple ideal” for a “philosophical archaeology”, as though the “schema” were “embryonically” impressed in the nature of human reason. It is in this sense that a history of philosophy *a priori* is conceivable (cf. *Models*, III, p. 758).

This topic also appeared (with a great variety of different developments) in a series of theoretical contributions elaborated by some of Kant’s followers during the period between 1791 (the year in which G.G. Fülleborn’s *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie* was founded) and the first decades of the new century. L. Geldsetzer collected this material and arranged it systematically, although he perhaps regarded it as something more unitary and compact than it really was, as if it represented a real ‘*Methodenstreit*’ on the history of philosophy planned and organised at the beginning of the century. Nevertheless, his work is an eloquent testimony to the circulation of certain ideas in the period preceding the spread of Hegel’s thought and idealistic historicism in general (see *Models*, III, p. 845 note 47).

This Kantian presence, which can be linked to Hegel, had already been noticed by Ludwig Feuerbach. In his 1835 review of the first two volumes of Hegel’s *Vorlesungen* on the history of philosophy, which had just appeared, Feuerbach mentions a series of figures, such as Reinhold, Fülleborn, Grohmann, and Tennemann, who can be credited with having pursued the criterion of searching for the “rational philosophical sense” in the systems presented by history, thus paving the way for the speculative approach adopted by Hegel himself. A decade after Feuerbach, Eduard Zeller retraced the path of the history of ancient philosophy in the previous 50 years, at pains to emphasise the historiographical and theoretical contribution of the ‘Kantians’, even though they had not yet acquired the more mature coherent speculative concept of Hegel (see below p. 258).

“On the concept of the history of philosophy”: this expression recurs explicitly in the works of these Kantians. It was an old topic, already present in Brucker, though in the past it had merely intended to define the boundaries of the field to be cultivated, in order to prevent it from being invaded by the most diverse expressions of human knowledge. Now, in the light of Kant, this recurring theme acquired a different sense: it briefly meant the need to exercise control over the logical consistency of the concept, an intense focus on the presence of a possible contradiction in it, of a possible incompatibility between ‘history’ and ‘philosophy’, between

empirics and scientific necessity. It was precisely with this remark that Hegel too was to start his course of lectures: “The first thought that may strike us in connection with the history of philosophy is that this subject itself involves at once an inner contradiction” (Hoffmeister, p. 14; cf. G/J, I, p. 9; Michelet¹, I, p. 24; Michelet², p. 9). Hence, to define a subject does not only mean to delimit its extent, but also introduce it into the circle of a rationality that makes it possible to treat it scientifically.

In the academic lecture *Ueber den Begriff der Geschichte der Philosophie* that opens the first issue of Fülleborn’s *Beiträge*, K.L. Reinhold formulated the following definition: the history of philosophy “is the representation of the sum of changes gone through by the science of the necessary connections between things [philosophy] from its birth to the present day” (BGPh, 1. Stück, 1791, pp. 19–20). This includes a definition of philosophy and above all, as far as its history is concerned, a very significant need for totality. The approach aimed at dealing with the totality of the history of philosophy was to find its most stimulating expression in Hegel. Yet Reinhold uses this definition here in order to distinguish the history of philosophy from a history of the “human spirit” (pp. 20–21), which – in the eyes of a Kantian – would run the risk of constraining reason within excessively anthropological boundaries; moreover, he uses it in order to distinguish the history of philosophy from the history of the other various sciences (the separate parts of philosophy itself, such as metaphysics) as well as from the lives of the philosophers and their literary production. Similarly, Fülleborn himself, in his *Plan zu einer Geschichte der Philosophie*, distinguishes between a series of introductory and auxiliary texts and the “real history of philosophy”, which is introduced by the “determination of its concept” and the history “of the development and education of the human spirit” (BGPh, 4. Stück, 1794, p. 185).

In these writings, as in other works by ‘Kantian’ authors, the predominant concern was therefore to determine the concept of the history of philosophy and a concept of philosophy that proclaimed its scientific nature, showed its possibility, established its distinction from other possible objects, and affirmed its totality. All this assumes, directly or indirectly, that this historical work is not simply the narration of what is contingent, but is a description of the truth in its universality and necessity.

More explicitly, in a lengthy essay, J.C.A. Grohmann gave a central role to Kant’s question concerning the possibility of a historiography of philosophy founded *a priori* and only thus made possible as a science not of the contingent but of the necessary: “if and how the history of the world, hitherto presented and arranged chronologically, can and must take a more systematic form, and to what extent a history of philosophy is possible *a priori*” (*Ueber den Begriff der Geschichte der Philosophie*, Wittenberg, 1797, p. 4). He identified this possibility in the extent to which there can be a historical multiple which is expressed in some way other than in the sensible succession of time: “the multiple that history finds in philosophy cannot and must not belong to that kind of multiple existing in sensible datum, given in succession, which has the character of change, of one and the same thing which transforms itself; rather, it should be something marked by the imprint of

philosophy; what I express must be something consisting concurrently at one and the same time, something given as one thing beside another thing; a multiple determined *a priori* and already contained in the concept of philosophy, which makes it possible to determine a history, an enumeration" (p. 30). Grohmann then declared that his request for an *a priori* manifold was satisfied by the condition that philosophy constitutes a "system" (p. 32).

The aim of Grohmann's thought in its simplicity is clear. 'System' and 'systematic' exposition correspond to what Reinhold had already called "necessary links between things"; this connection does not take place here by virtue of an extrinsic temporal succession, but by connections and foundations intrinsic in systems, that is to say, in the system of philosophy. From a Kantian point of view, a history of philosophy which is conceived *a priori* is the system of philosophies when it is complete and presented in a way that reveals all the implicit *a priori* potentialities it contains. Hence Grohmann, closing his work and predicting the end and conclusion of the course of philosophy, could express himself in this way: "The history of philosophy is the end of all philosophising, and it can be established only when a true philosophy has been brought into being" (p. 101).

We are approaching Hegel by way of some themes and theories discussed in the circles in which he matured, in an attempt to trace the origin of some of his thoughts on the history of philosophy. Without giving a verdict on possible Kantian contributions to Hegelianism, there is a peculiar feature which distinguishes Kant from Hegel. Let us insist on this aspect, although it is well-known and clearly evident. Kant and those who were inspired by his thought in different ways remained within the limits of the transcendental: the *a priori* they speak of is a structure which does not go beyond the substance of the form it is made up of. The protagonist is reason in general (*überhaupt*). And if we wished to give this transcendental form an ontological substance, we would easily find documents in these Kantian works saying that it is inscribed in the nature of human reason. But in this way, we would not proceed in perfect agreement with Kant's true perspective. It is different to speak of reason in general and then restrict it (for Kant the anthropological point of view is restrictive) to the reason of man. What remains is therefore the following alternative: either the anthropological horizon or transcendental formalism. Kantianism radically rejects the adoption of the metaphysical and theological solution of a reason which is the absolute itself, a philosophy-history of philosophy which constitutes a self-thinking of the absolute. But this was precisely the path Hegel was to follow.

It is most likely that Hegel reached this solution towards the end of his period in Jena, when in 1805–1806 he held his first course on the history of philosophy, as we shall see later. But a few years earlier, at the beginning of his period in Jena, in the *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie* (1801), the very first work he published, there are some introductory pages that deal with the "historical examination of philosophical systems". These represent Hegel's first explicit determination of the concept of the history of philosophy, which is not yet 'Hegelian' (at most it reveals the incisive influence of Schelling) and already rejects some of the thoughts of the 'Kantian' Reinhold (I quote the *Differenz* from the

critical edition: Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 4, pp. 5–92, and from the English translation by H.S. Harris, in G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, Albany, 1977).

"No philosophical system can escape the possibility of this sort of reception; every philosophical system can be treated historically" (*Differenz*, p. 9 [English transl. p. 85]). What does this historical "treatment" (*behandelt zu werden*) consist of and what originates it? The abundance of philosophical systems that have been produced (Hegel refers here to the great ferment of his time) is similar to the abundance of forms produced by life itself: it is the path towards exhaustion and fossilization, and yet "the urge toward totality" that gives rise to them does not come to an end. In historiography, this impulse manifests itself by transforming the totality of science (*Wissenschaft*), which is a system of living thought, into the completeness of knowledge (*Kenntnisse*) and contents which it provides for us. The multiplicity of what a system has takes on "the illusion of being what [it] is not". For the historian, interest in a problem becomes "indifference" to its truth, "curiosity", which turns the understanding of the system into a question of denomination, "just as Adam showed his dominance over the animals by giving names to them". And again: in historical treatments the system becomes "dead opinion", and from its very origin, from its very first appearance, it turns into a "past". Hegel then makes a significant hermeneutic observation: "The living spirit that dwells in a philosophy demands to be born of a kindred spirit if it is to unveil itself" (p. 9 [pp. 85–86]), rather than arise from the curiosity of the historian and from his inclination to classify and denominate.

These lively observations contrast the historical knowledge of a philosophy with its theoretical participation, just as the fossilization of vital forms, their phenomenal visibility, is opposed to their unobjectifiable vitality, their having to their being. In reality, Hegel is seeking to overcome false or partial historiographical attitudes in order to find an approach to philosophical systems capable of understanding their meaning and spirit. Here he expresses himself with Schellingian terms, thus referring back to a sort of vitalistic intuitivism.

Hegel's text, as he himself declares, was written on the occasion of a recent publication by Reinhold (*Beyträge zur leichtern Übersicht des Zustandes der Philosophie beym Anfänge des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Heft I, Hamburg, 1801) in which the author saw the possibility of identifying a more useful aspect for the history of philosophy than mere information relating to content or interest deriving from erudite curiosity. For Reinhold, this serves as a means "to penetrate more profoundly than ever into the spirit of philosophy, and to develop the idiosyncratic views (*eigenthümliche Ansichte*) of one's predecessors [...] further in new views of one's own [...]"; the history of philosophy is conceived of as knowledge of "previous attempts to solve the problem of philosophy" (*Differenz*, p. 10 [p. 86]). Nevertheless, Hegel immediately saw an unacceptable premise in Reinhold's statements: that philosophy can be defined "as a kind of handicraft" consisting of attempts we learn from and perfect: a series of particular points of view conflicting with the nonpeculiar, non-particular character which is proper to the essence of philosophy (pp. 10–11 [p. 86]). Hegel had previously opposed erudition as a means for reaching a historical

understanding of the systems of philosophy, but now – against Reinhold – he opposes the erudite and partial way of understanding the history of systems and the meaning of their following on from one another: this was simply a preparatory exercise for something of greater maturity although in turn destined to be preparatory for what was to follow; and so on. He opposed this way of understanding the historical process with an intuitive and aesthetic outlook, so much so that he seemed to deny the process itself. “The true peculiarity of a philosophy lies in the interesting individuality (*interessante Individualität*) which is the organic shape that Reason has built for itself out of the material of a particular age. The particular speculative Reason [of a later time] finds in it spirit of its spirit, flesh of its flesh, it intuitively itself in it as one and the same and yet as another living being. Every philosophy is complete in itself, and like an authentic work of art, carries the totality within itself” (p. 12 [pp. 88–89]).

These expressions remind us of Schelling but also of Schleiermacher. It was not by chance that Hegel had concluded his brief introduction (*Vorerinnerung*) to the *Differenz* with a reference to Schleiermacher’s *Reden über Religion* (1799): these texts “indicate the need for a philosophy that will recompense nature for the mis-handling that it suffered in Kant and Fichte’s systems, and set Reason itself in harmony with nature, not by having Reason renounce itself or become an insipid imitator of nature, but by Reason recasting itself into nature out of its own inner strength” (p. 8 [p. 83]).

Broadly speaking, we can say that, starting from some disputed Kantian thoughts and trying to formulate more widely shared conceptions rooted in Schelling and Schleiermacher, Hegel came to a point of arrival with his thought on the history of philosophy which we can place towards the end of his period in Jena. In the *Differenz*, more precisely in the initial pages mentioned above, we can already see the belief that the history of philosophy is not a vicissitude of human thought but a vicissitude of the absolute itself. Expressions like those we have pointed out, the “urge toward totality” which is proper to “life”, the “living spirit” that demands to be born again “of a kindred spirit” in order to manifest itself, the historical objectivity of its phenomenon that only reveals the appearance of its having, not the substance of its being, the “interesting individuality” of philosophical systems, as a shape reason has arranged of itself: these are general ideas waiting for more explicit concentration around a new theme which has not yet been clearly formulated. It was necessary to weld the absolute with its historical life through time more effectively. In the field of the history of philosophy, this welding was to be ensured by the coincidence between the logical deduction of the categories of absolute thought and the succession of the systems of philosophy through their history. The law that governs it is dialectic, which provides the scientific certainty that the unity of the system survives in the essential historical articulations of the systems.

A parallel analysis should be carried out concerning the development of Hegel’s interpretations of the various thinkers. An interest in history permeates every instant of his long development, starting with the period of his studies in Tübingen. We will briefly mention this aspect later, when we present those thinkers he sympathised with most: Plato, Aristotle, the Neoplatonists, and Spinoza.

Bibliographical Note

A bibliography on Hegel as a historian of philosophy is provided at the end of the chapter. Here we briefly outline the literature on the history of philosophy to which Hegel refers the reader in ‘Quellen und Literatur’ (Hoffmeister, pp. 255–260; G/J, I, pp. 359–364; Michelet¹, I, pp. 132–136; Michelet², pp. 89–92). Vast historiographical works: Th. Stanley, *The History of Philosophy* (London, 1701), Latin transl. by G. Olearius (Leipzig, 1711); Jo. Jac. Bruckeri *Historia critica philosophiae* (Leipzig, 1742–1744 [1st ed.] and 1766–1767 [2nd ed.]), and the summary Bruckeri *Institutiones historiae philosophicae* (Leipzig, 1747; 2nd ed. Leipzig, 1756; 3rd ed. by F.G. Born, Leipzig, 1790); D. Tiedemann, *Geist der spekulativen Philosophie* (Marburg, 1791–1797); Joh. Buhle, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie und einer kritischen Literatur derselben* (Göttingen, 1796–1804); W.G. Tennemann, *Geschichte der Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1798–1819). Summaries: F. Ast, *Grundriss einer Geschichte der Philosophie* (Landshut, 1807); W.G. Tennemann, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, 5th ed. revised and updated by A. Wendt (Leipzig, 1829); Th. A. Rixner, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Sulzbach, 1822–1823).

On the historiographical theory of eclecticism, see *Models*, II, pp. 177–178, 183–190, and 301–315; *Models*, III, pp. 3–8 and 23–25; see also M. Longo, “*Historia philosophiae philosophica*”. *Teorie e metodi della storia della filosofia tra Seicento e Settecento* (Milan, 1986), pp. 43–65. On the methodological debate started by Kant and expanded by the ‘Kantians’ at the turn of the nineteenth century, see *Models*, III, pp. 516–519, 537–547, 752–764, 769–785, and 842–861.

1.1 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831)

Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie

1.1.1 *The History of Philosophy in Hegel’s Academic Life*

“In the winter of 1805 for the first time [Hegel] lectured on the history of philosophy” (K. Rosenkranz, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben* [Berlin, 1844], Darmstadt, 1977, p. 161). The winter semester of 1805–1806 is therefore the first of the nine semesters Hegel spent in Heidelberg and Berlin, during each of which he held a complete course on the history of philosophy (a theoretical introduction and the historical events from the beginnings of Western thought in Greece up to his own age). Rosenkranz then adds some interpretative considerations. “In 1805–1806, the fact that he could for the first time lecture on the history of philosophy certainly represented a considerable step forward for him. In the essays he had published in the *Kritisches Journal* he had already given abundantly proof that he possessed a great familiarity with this subject; but now he was aware of and completely certain

about the unity of philosophy present in all philosophers in the *continuum* of one great framework; for the first time, he elaborated universal history from the point of view of absolute knowledge; for the first time he considered himself in his historical relationship with his predecessors [...]. In the subsequent versions of the lessons which were later printed, the texts of these lectures on the history of philosophy remained fundamentally unchanged and were only enriched" (p. 201).

The last years he spent in Jena represent therefore a point of arrival. On the eve of the *Phänomenologie*, for the first time Hegel seems to have acquired a conception of the history of philosophy which, in its essential outlines, was to remain the same – except for some developments and improvements – throughout the following years. The unity of philosophy through its history, the dialectic *continuum* of the historical course from the Greeks up to the present, the absolute knowledge expressed in it, and the Hegelian system itself as a conclusive synthesis of the previous logical-historical movement as a whole: these are the fundamental features of this conception, which Rosenkranz summarises with great clarity. Scholars agree on the core of this analysis, but – in his youthful studies on Plato or Spinoza, in the *Differenz*, or the *Verhältniß des Skepticismus zur Philosophie*, written in 1802 – they have sought for the antecedents in which Hegel might have provided a different interpretation from that later contained in his *Vorlesungen* (cf. Düsing, pp. 16–18). All this concerns his interpretations of the individual philosophers, however: the general orientation of the history of philosophy as a whole, which was what was most important for Hegel, dates from the last years of his period in Jena.

Hegel seemed to attach great importance to his lectures on the history of philosophy, yet he did not publish a single word of them: except for a few pages, no final version of this huge amount of material exists in the form of an original manuscript by the author, nor did he arrange it in some way with a view to publication. All the material of his lessons was published posthumously, starting with the first complete edition of his works (1833–1835), and almost all of it was taken from the notes written down by his pupils. There exists an original autograph consisting of a notebook containing the text of the course held in Jena (1805–1806) before a “panel” of 17 students: this notebook was used by Michelet to prepare his edition of the *Lectures*, it then disappeared: lost or destroyed. Michelet informs us that Hegel referred to it when he developed his subsequent courses of lectures (Heidelberg, Berlin) and gradually expanded its contents with marginal notes and loose leaves.¹ Indeed, two original manuscripts of Hegel’s are preserved: two texts dating from the years 1820 and 1823 (see G/J, I, pp. 1–13), as well as three other very short fragments.²

¹On Karl Ludwig Michelet see M. Moser, *Hegels Schüler C.L. Michelet. Recht und Geschichte jenseits der Schulteilung* (Berlin, 2003).

²On the lost autograph text, corresponding to the course he held in Jena (1805–1806) and its enlargements, as well as the use Hegel made of it later on, see Michelet², pp. v–vi. On the other original manuscripts which have come down to us and have been published, see W. Jaeschke, ‘Vorwort’ to the new critical edition of the *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie* (G/J, I, p. xvi, note 12, and pp. xviii–xxxvii, where the author corrects in great measure what had been affirmed by J. Hoffmeister in the ‘Vorbemerkungen’ to the previous critical edition; cf. Hoffmeister, pp. x–xii).

After the first course in Jena, Hegel held the following courses of lessons on the history of philosophy: Heidelberg in the winter semesters of 1816–17 and 1817–18; and Berlin in the summer of 1819 and the winter semesters of 1820–21, 1823–24, 1825–26, 1827–28, and 1829–30. Hegel had also planned to hold a course in the winter semester 1831–32 and had just started it in November 1831 when he suddenly died. The audience increased as the years went by: from 17 in Jena to 80 in Berlin in the winter semester of 1823–24, which was also attended by Michelet, during which Hegel held his lessons on the history of philosophy five times a week, to more than 116 listeners in Berlin in 1825–26 (see Hoffmeister, p. x).

1.1.2 Editions of the *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*

The editions of the *Vorlesungen* from which we quote here are the following:

1. *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke*, vols XVIII–XX, ed. by E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel (Frankfurt a.M., 1971); this edition reproduces the vols XIII–XV (Berlin, 1833–1835) of the first ed. of the *Werke* edited by K.L. Michelet [abbreviation: Michelet¹, followed by part and page reference]. As concerns the criteria adopted by Moldenhauer and Michel, see ‘Anmerkung der Redaktion zu Band 18, 19, 20’, vol. XX, pp. 520–527.
2. *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by G.J.P.J. Bolland (Leiden, 1908). This work reproduces the second, shorter ed., edited by Michelet (Berlin, 1840–1844, 3 vols) [abbreviation: Michelet², followed by page reference]. It was on this second Michelet edition that the first English translation was based: *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, transl. by E.S. Haldane and F.H. Simson (London, 1892–1896), 3 vols [part and page reference in square brackets].
3. *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by J. Hoffmeister, third ed. revised by F. Nicolin (Hamburg, 1959) [abbreviation: Hoffmeister]; of this edition there exists a partial English translation: *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, transl. by T.M. Knox and A.V. Miller (Oxford, 1985) [page reference in square brackets].
4. *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by P. Garniron and W. Jaeschke, in G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte* (Hamburg, 1986–1996), Bd. 6, Teil 1. *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie. Orientalische Philosophie* [1994] (this text is also reproduced in the ‘Philosophische Bibliothek’: *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie. Einleitung. Orientalische Philosophie*, Hamburg, 1993); Bd. 7, Teil 2. *Griechische Philosophie I. Thales bis Kyniker* [1990]; Bd. 8, Teil 3. *Griechische Philosophie II. Plato bis Proklos* [1996]; Bd. 9, Teil 4. *Philosophie des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit* [1986] [abbreviation: G/J, followed by part and page reference]; of this edition there exists a partial English translation,

which we quote here in square brackets: *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6*, ed. by R.F. Brown (Oxford, 2006–2009), 3 vols [part and page reference in square brackets].

1.1.3 *The Theoretical Phase: The Einleitung*

1.1.3.1 The Need for the *Einleitung* and Its Structure

The *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* are preceded by a lengthy ‘Introduction’ that constitutes an integral and essential part of it. Hegel himself explains the need for this ‘Introduction’ in the initial pages, where he summarises its significance with the following two arguments. First of all: “Without an introduction the work could not start, because the history of philosophy is bound up with so many other spheres, and related to so many other sciences, that we must settle the mode of thinking appropriate to this history” (Hoffmeister, p. 79 [English transl., p. 53]; cf. G/J, I, p. 139; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 24–25; Michelet², p. 8 [English transl., I, pp. 5–6]). His first intention is therefore very simple and, apparently at least, has to do exclusively with the contents, a legacy of the historiographical erudition typical of the eighteenth century. Brucker too, in his *Dissertatio praeliminaris*, had expressed the need to clearly determine the philosophical contents that his history should include, so as not to open the gates indiscriminately to all the many and varied contents of human learning.

The second reason is more concerned with method, although, for the moment, it seems to be merely inspired by an obvious general observation: “Our ideas, or our intelligence generally, demand that the whole, the universal, be surveyed, that the aim of the whole be grasped, before coming down to details” (*ibid.*). First the whole, then its parts. This observation already presupposes the more profound task of the ‘Introduction’, which Hegel explains later on: the concept of the history of philosophy and the subdivision into epochs or periods, topics for the ‘Introduction’, should already provide us with a general survey of the whole, with a complete frame of reference within which the various lectures will inscribe the account of the thought of this or that philosopher and the entire history as a set of particulars.

In order to fulfil both requirements, Hegel devoted many lessons, with a strong theoretical character, to developing introductory themes arranged according to a scheme which remained more or less unchanged from the time of the lessons given in Heidelberg to those in Berlin. The scheme is divided into four parts. The first concerns “the concept and the definition of the history of philosophy”; the treatment is structured into two basic categories: “development” and “process of concretion” (*Konkretion*), followed by lengthy considerations on the “use” of this concept from a historiographical point of view and on the “consequences” involved in the method used by the historiographer. The second part concerns “the relationship of the history of philosophy to the other productions of the human spirit – religion, art, science, and so forth, particularly with reference to their history”, as well as the

“concept of philosophy”, in order to distinguish the history of philosophy from the other products: the empirical sciences, religion (the treatment of which is always very lengthy), and popular philosophy. The third and fourth parts are much shorter: the third concerns “the division of the history of philosophy in its necessary periods [...], a division that must exhibit these periods as an organically progressing whole, as a rational connection, through which alone this history itself is worthy of being a science”; in other words, it concerns the question of its starting point in Greek thought and the problem of periodisation in general (ancient thought and Christian Germanic thought, modern thought, which is prepared by the Middle Ages and the Renaissance); finally, the fourth part concerns the sources and contains a short presentation of the literature relating to the history of philosophy, which essentially constitutes a short bibliography (Hoffmeister, pp. 10–11, 23–24, and 92–93 [pp. 7–9, 15, and 62–64]; cf. G/J, I, pp. 4, 14, and 205–207 [I, pp. 207–208, 168, and 45–46]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 18–19; Michelet², pp. 8–9 [I, pp. 6–7]).

1.1.3.2 The Concept of the History of Philosophy

In the few pages that precede the first part of the ‘Introduction’, Hegel addresses the fundamental question, which is presented as a contradiction (*Widerspruch*) arising from the concept of the history of philosophy. Every history consists of facts arranged in a continuous sequence (*Taten in einer Reihenfolge*). In the case of philosophy, these facts are the expressions of free thought; they are thoughts. They represent the history of thought, of an intellectual world. But “a thought which is truly a thought is in and for itself, is eternal. Truth is contained in thought alone, it is true not only today or tomorrow, but for ever, independent of time. So far as it is *in* time, it is true always, for every time. Hence the contradiction appears at once, namely that thought is supposed to have a history. In history what is displayed is what is mutable, what has happened, what has been and is past, perished in the night of the past, and exists no longer. But thought (true and necessary thought, the only kind which is our business here) is incapable of any alteration; it is not past and gone; it is *now*. So the question is, how can something immutable, which therefore lies outside history, nevertheless have a history?” (Hoffmeister, p. 85 [p. 57]; cf. G/J, I, pp. 206 [I, pp. 45–46]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 23–24, note; Michelet², pp. 7–8 [I, p. 5]). In other words: we should define which characteristics philosophical thought should possess in order to be able to overcome the contradiction between the fact that it is always true and eternal – lying, it would seem, *outside* history – and the fact that it is however *in* history.

A few years earlier, in the first lessons of the winter semester of 1820–21 in Berlin, Hegel addressed the subject by emphasizing the historical dimensions of our spiritual being, in a wide-ranging discourse. “Our present position in science, and more specifically in philosophy”, is due to a “tradition”, a “sacred chain”. In philosophy, tradition is not like “the course of nature in the endless alteration and activity of its configurations and forms, a course that always sticks to its original laws and makes no progress”; in the case of the philosophical tradition, we notice instead

a progress, an increase, because here we are dealing with a spiritual reality. The life of “the spirit of the world” is action (*Tat*), and this action is “history”, although among some peoples, such as the Chinese, the spirit of the world shows itself to be static (Hoffmeister, pp. 21–22; G/J, I, pp. 5–9 [I, pp. 166–167]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 21–22; Michelet², pp. 4–6 [I, pp. 2–3]). Indeed, Hegel arrived at the same “contradiction”: how is it possible to harmonize our essential historicity with the unity and eternity of what is true?

The first and therefore “the most superficial way of considering the history of philosophy” is as “a succession of configurations of conceptual thinking” (Hoffmeister, p. 94; G/J, I, p. 208 [I, p. 47]). This is the most superficial – but also the most untrue – form in which philosophical history can manifest itself. Thoughts are seen as casual events which have appeared in time: “contingent thoughts” are “opinions”. Nothing but a “gallery of opinions”, foolish ideas, “errors”. They might be interesting from the point of view of curiosity or “erudition”; but they are useless to know. The alternative, which is also wrong, would be to choose one of these opinions as if it were the true and only one. Indeed, in this situation of uncertainty how is it possible to make a choice which is not totally arbitrary and only apparently determined? (Hoffmeister, pp. 24–27 [pp. 15–17]; G/J, I, pp. 15–19 [pp. 168–171]; cf. Michelet¹, pp. 28–33; Michelet², pp. 12–16 [I, pp. 11–15]).

The real way out of this alternative lies in a closer analysis of the meaning of this situation: “truth is only one” and yet philosophy presents itself as a “diversity of philosophical systems”. This diversity as such should be understood “in a quite different sense than that of the abstract antithesis of truth and error”; this also applies to the proposition that “truth is only one, is itself, however, still abstract and formal” (Hoffmeister, pp. 29–33 [pp. 18–21]; G/J, I, pp. 20–25 [I, pp. 172–175]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 36–38; Michelet², pp. 17–19 [I, pp. 17–19]). It is at this point that the concepts of “concrete” (*das Konkrete, die Konkretion*) and “development” (*Entwicklung*) come into play, concepts which represent a radical change when closely analysing and establishing the Hegelian concept of the history of philosophy.

The two concepts are sometimes presented in an almost summary fashion with a reference to explanations of an intuitive nature. Philosophy “does in fact stand in the province of thought and therefore has to do with universals; its content is abstract, but only in form, in the element to which it belongs; but in itself the Idea is essentially concrete, the unity of different categories. This is what distinguishes rational knowing (*Vernunftbegriffnis*) from the knowing of the mere intellect (*Verstandesbegriffnis*). It is the business of philosophy to show, against the intellect, that what is true, the Idea, does not consist of empty universals but in a universal which in itself is the particular, the determinate” (Hoffmeister, p. 30 [p. 19]; G/J, I, pp. 21–22 [I, p. 173]; Michelet¹, I, p. 43; Michelet², p. 23 [I, pp. 24–25]). Indeed, the examples show the abstract aspects and the concrete aspects from the point of view of perception (the abstract colour red is different from the concreteness of red as a property of roses) and from the point of view of logical principles (“the wholly abstract proposition of identity”, A is A, in contrast to the concrete “principle of ground” [*Grund, principium rationis*]; Hoffmeister, p. 31; G/J, I, pp. 22–23 [I, pp. 173–174]; Michelet, I, pp. 44–45; Michelet¹, I, pp. 44–45 [I, pp. 25–26]). Truth,

thus viewed in its concreteness, manifests an impulse therefore to develop. “Only what is living and spiritual moves or bestirs itself within, and develops. So the Idea, concrete in itself and self-developing, is an organic system, a totality including in itself a wealth of stages and features” (Hoffmeister, p. 32; cf. G/J, I, p. 24, [I, p. 174]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 46–47; Michelet², p. 25 [I, pp. 27–28]).

At other times, Hegel – explicitly and with lengthy accounts – relates the two categories of “concrete” and “development” to the dialectic structure understood in its more technical aspect. More properly, the concept of development is conceived of as a property of the Idea which, within the more general domain designated by the term “thought” (*Gedanke*), is “the concept (*Begriff*) insofar it realizes itself”. The Idea is truth, whatever the historians of philosophy may say; like the Kantian Tennemann, they usually hold that the Idea is impossible to reach, which they justify by pointing to the proof of the multiplicity of systems in the history of philosophy (Hoffmeister, pp. 99–100; G/J, I, pp. 211–212 [I, pp. 48–49]; Michelet¹, I, p. 33; Michelet², pp. 15–16 [I, p. 15]).

The moments (*Bestimmungen*) of the development of the Idea are: being-in-itself (*Ansichsein*), existence (*Dasein*), being-for-itself (*Fürsichsein*), and also – in the Aristotelian terms Hegel uses here – *potency* (or real possibility) which, through its unfolding in existence, becomes actual, gives rise to the act of being-for-itself, or the being concrete of the spirit (Hoffmeister, pp. 101–118; G/J, I, pp. 212–218 [I, pp. 49–53]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 39–46; Michelet², pp. 19–25 [I, pp. 20–27]). Hegel goes on to further explain the three moments which make up the dialectic structure of development; it is not necessary for us to follow him here, but let us just point out some distinctive elements. The second, for example, which is called “existence” (*Dasein*), is the placing in the thereness of that which is in-itself, while remaining distinct from it in-itself, it is the unfolding (*sich entfalten*) of that which is embedded (*eingehüllt*) in potentiality. The third moment is the recognition of the identical nature of the two previous moments which had posited themselves as distinct; this identical nature corresponds to being in act, being-for-itself, or return into itself. The examples proposed by Hegel are eloquent too: they mix naturalistic experiences – obviously of Aristotelian origin and hardly suited to the purpose – with idealistic and theological experiences, which prove to be more appropriate. The *in-itself* can be exemplified by the seed that contains potentially all the determinations in act in the plant; but it can also be exemplified by the Self, the simple point that shrouds all the manifold richness of the faculties (representations, impulses, desires, inclinations, thoughts). The *for-itself* therefore is the plant in act, even though – Hegel observes – it does not have a real *for-itself*, which necessarily requires that “return” which is only possible within the ambit of the consciousness. The most eloquent example of the three moments of development is therefore the theological one. Indeed, “the inner life of God in itself is this very development”, for God “posits a distinction and brings himself to determinate being, to being for another” and “in his universality determines himself”. This is “the eternal creation of the world, in the other form of God’s Son”, and at the same time is “the eternal return (*zurückkehren*) of the spirit into itself (Hoffmeister, pp. 109–110 [p. 79]; G/J, I, p. 216 [I, p. 52]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 44; Michelet², p. 23 [I, p. 25]).

Development, conceived of in these terms, is a process of becoming concrete, a movement, and, as it is concrete, it consists of a series of products of the human spirit, namely the philosophical systems in history. "This series is not to be represented as a straight line but as a circle, as a return into itself. This circle has on its circumference a large number of circles; one development is always movement through many developments". This series in its entirety "is a sequence of developments that returns into itself" and each particular development is a stage of the totality. (Hoffmeister, p. 111; G/J, I, p. 217 [I, p. 52]).

We thus have a general definition of the two characteristics of *development* and *concrete* which are proper to the reality of the Idea and, precisely for this reason, of philosophy too, as the supreme expression of the Idea itself.

1.1.3.3 Applications

What is the meaning of this dialectic of the development of the concrete with reference to philosophy? We thus come to what Hegel calls the "applications" (*Anwendungen*) of the two concepts of 'development' and 'concrete' to the field of philosophy.

In the first place they mean that philosophy is an "organic system", although this term has been contested in recent times. "But the proper meaning of 'system' is 'totality'", and system is something true only as a totality that "begins from what is simple, and through development proceeds to the concrete" (Hoffmeister, p. 118; G/J, I, pp. 219–220 [I, p. 54]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 46–47; Michelet², p. 25 [I, pp. 27–28]). This also applies to the history of philosophy, which Hegel makes coincide with philosophy. "The contemporary or latest philosophy contains the very fruit of the labor of millennia; this philosophy is the result of all that has gone before [...]. It follows that the history of philosophy is the same as the system of philosophy" (Hoffmeister, p. 119; G/J, I, p. 220 [I, pp. 54–55]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 47–48; Michelet², pp. 25–26 [I, p. 29]). In other words, as Hegel explains in another famous passage from these lessons: "[...] The historical succession of the systems of philosophy is the same as the succession in the logical derivation of the idea's conceptual determinations [...]. The study of the history of philosophy is the study of philosophy itself, and cannot be otherwise" (Hoffmeister, pp. 34–35; G/J, I, pp. 27–28 [I, p. 176]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 49; Michelet², pp. 26–27 [I, p. 30]).

The second application of the concepts of development and concrete is that the philosophies in history are not the opinions of one person as opposed to those of another, but they are universal thoughts of the spirit that develops according to necessity. The multiplicity of the philosophies is nothing but the development of the one philosophy (Hoffmeister, pp. 122–123; G/J, I, pp. 225–226 [I, pp. 57–58]).

The third application consists in stating that the fact that the various philosophies contradict each other (*sich widersprechen*) also constitutes their "reciprocal refutation" (*sich widerlegen*) (Hoffmeister, p. 126; G/J, I, p. 227 [I, p. 59]). The highest form taken by the Idea in a particular time is downgraded to a moment in a higher realization. This is evident in the example of the seed and plant already used by

Hegel: "The blossom is the refutation of the leaves": it looks like it is the highest and truest existence of the tree. But the blossom is in turn refuted by the fruit. And "the fruit, which is the last stage, comprises the entire energy of what went before" (Hoffmeister, p. 127; *G/J*, p. 227 [I p. 59]; Michelet¹, I, p. 56–57; Michelet², pp. 32–33 [I, pp. 37–38]).

Refutation implies negation: "refutation is the exhibiting of the negative, of the limitation of a content". But negation has two different forms: in one, a subsequent system demonstrates the untenability of the preceding system, and its principle asserts itself by negating the principle of the preceding one. These are principles of the understanding, each of which is one-sided, "and this one-sidedness is displayed by the other principle being set over against it. Both principles are then one-sided". In this case, "totality is not yet present as the unity that conjoins them", but "exists only as completeness" in the course of the development. "Totality is, however, also present in philosophy itself". This happens in the case of the opposition between Epicureanism and Stoicism, between the absolute unity of Spinoza's substance and the individuality of Leibniz' monad. "The second way in which the negation of a philosophy is posited is the higher way": here "the one-sided principles are united, are present there only as moments of a unity, no longer as independent but instead as downgraded to moments or elements of the one idea that embraces both principles, downgraded to being determinations of this one idea". This is not the unity of eclecticism, which is nothing other than "a mere ragbag of diverse opinions or principles", but it is rather that concrete unity that involves "the absolute, complete identity of these distinct elements". The examples used by Hegel are of a conceptual and historical nature: the unity of the human soul, which includes in the rational faculty the vegetative soul and the animal soul; the unity of Plato's philosophy, which also includes Eleatic, Pythagorean, and Heraclitean elements; the unity of Alexandrian philosophy, in which Neoplatonism, Neopythagoreanism, and Neoaristotelianism are closely intertwined (Hoffmeister, pp. 130–131; *G/J*, I, pp. 229–230 [I, pp. 60–61]).

Identifying philosophy with its history allows the past to become present. What has a historical character is dead: "the past as such is not, for it exists no more, is devoid of life". Here Hegel polemicizes with ardent and enthusiastic tones against those erudite historical studies, exalting the pulsating life of spirit: "Leave the dead to bury their dead, and follow me" (Hoffmeister, p. 133; *G/J*, I, p. 231 [I, p. 62]). Finally, once again in a polemic against Tennemann, he objects to the impartiality which is supposed to characterise the historian; this, he observes, is in agreement with Kant's philosophy, "the fundamental proposition of which is that truth cannot be known". While Tennemann believed that one should not take sides with the thinking spirit, Hegel maintained that true impartiality is not to take sides with the opinions, thoughts, and concepts elaborated by individuals, but, on the contrary, to be on the side of philosophy (Hoffmeister, p. 135; *G/J*, I, pp. 232–233 [I, pp. 63–64]; cf. Michelet¹, p. 33; Michelet², p. 15–16 [I, p. 15]).

1.1.3.4 Methodological Consequences

After outlining the concept of the history of philosophy, the first part of the 'Introduction' concludes by emphasising some consequences for historiographical treatment (Hoffmeister, pp. 136–146; G/J, I, pp. 159–163 and 233–235 [I, pp. 63–65]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 58–69; Michelet², pp. 34–42 [I, pp. 39–49]). These consequences are also suggested by some demands of a practical nature, which have a beneficial effect on the attitude and choices of the historiographer. The first consequence comes from the brevity of a semester of lessons, which is not enough to expound the philosophical thought elaborated by the human spirit over the course of the millennia. The limited nature of the timetable compels the teacher to confine his account of the philosophies to their principles, above all in the case of the most ancient philosophies, which are the simplest, the most abstract, and most indeterminate. A large amount of information regarding historical, biographical, and critical aspects must therefore be left out: such things, for example, as the fact that Thales forecasted a solar eclipse, or that Descartes and Leibniz concerned themselves with mathematical analysis. An important consequence is a certain respect for historical diversity. We cannot ask ourselves (with reference to J. F. Flatt, *De theismo Thaleti Milesio abjudicando*, Tübingen, 1785) whether Thales' philosophy is theism or not. The simplicity and poverty which characterise the definition of problems in the early stages of philosophy prevents us from relating it to the debates taking place in our own time. This is also why we cannot ascribe the principle *ex nihilo nihil fit* to Thales, as Brucker does (Hoffmeister, p. 143; G/J, I, pp. 234–235, 159–160, 41 [I, pp. 64–65 and 184]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 58–69; Michelet², pp. 37–42 [I, pp. 41–49]), and so forth.

1.1.3.5 The Relationship Between Philosophy and the Other Aspects of Culture, That Is to Say, the Concept of Philosophy

A. Philosophy and particular sciences

The fundamental and most significant chapter of this strongly theoretical *Einleitung* thus ends, and the second chapter – longer but perhaps not as weighty from the point of view of conceptual principles – begins. In some redactions (for example that of 1825–26) it is entitled 'The Relationship of Philosophy with the other Expressions of Spirit' (Hoffmeister, p. 155; G/J, I, p. 235 [I, p. 65]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 69; Michelet², p. 42 [I, p. 49]); in other redactions (for example the Berlin autograph manuscript of 1820) the title is 'The Concept of Philosophy' (Hoffmeister, p. 38; G/J, I, p. 57). Both formulations express the same thought and have the same purpose. The "other expressions of spirit" in history are the sciences, poetical theories, art, and religion. Explaining their relationship with philosophical expression in the course of its history is equivalent to defining a "concept of philosophy" that distinguishes it from other expressions, to which, however, it is connected in history. Philosophy is situated in history, it is historically related to other products of the spirit; but it is also fully determined in itself and distinct from them.

The relationship between philosophy and the other expressions can be viewed from two sides: a more strictly historical perspective which takes into consideration the position of philosophy in the history of peoples with respect to the other expressions; and a perspective constituted by “the connection that philosophy has with religion, with science, in general with what is more closely akin to it” (Hoffmeister, p. 147; G/J, I, p. 236 [I, p. 66]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 69; Michelet², p. 42 [I, p. 50]). This does not correspond to the chronological position it occupies in the various epochs, but to the theoretical connections between philosophy and the other expressions of the spirit. For example, Hegel was to say that philosophy and the natural sciences are linked by a connection (an agreement, a concordance) which does not concern their contents but rather the form in which these contents are assumed; between philosophy and religion, on the other hand, there is agreement as to content, which is the same for both (the absolute), but not as to the form in which the spirit expresses itself (mythical in the case of religion, rational in the case of philosophy).

The more strictly historical connection is in some way extrinsic to philosophy. It consists in believing that philosophy, like the other spiritual products, is always an expression of the “spirit of its age”; yet, philosophy represents the final moment of that age, the moment in which a sort of negation takes place. “Thinking is negation of the immediate, natural mode. The child must be trained and so forth; the immediate mode [of being] must be superseded” (Hoffmeister, p. 151; G/J, I, pp. 238–239 [I, p. 68]). Similarly, in the life of peoples the time of youth and full bloom is eventually followed by the time of philosophical reflection and negation: in Greece, philosophy flourished in the mature epoch of the Peloponnesian war; in Rome towards the end of the Republic, and then again, with Neoplatonism, in the declining years of the Empire; subsequently, it was in the autumn of the Middle Ages that a revival of the ancient philosophies took place (Hoffmeister, p. 152; G/J, I, p. 240 [I, pp. 68–69]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 70–72; Michelet², pp. 42–44 [I, pp. 51–53]).

The connection is more intrinsic when it is seen “in the thing itself”, that is to say, in the substantial relations of philosophy with the other sciences, with art, and above all with religion. Here the intention is to define the connection in order to be able to identify philosophy in it and to outline its history, excluding that which philosophy is not. Indeed, the relationship with the natural sciences and scientific culture in general (*wissenschaftliche Bildung*) lies in the formal aspects rather than in the contents: not in the empirical contents of the sciences, but in the moment of “law” and principles, which are also expressed by scientific knowledge: “the scientific enterprise has in common with philosophy the ‘formal element’, thinking. Science begins from experience, but it thinks about experience and seeks for what is universal in what it examines. Thus, the scientific side has the formal element in common with philosophy”. For this reason, the Seven Wise Men are sometimes counted among the Greek philosophers, and in the modern age we can speak of Newton’s “philosophy” (Hoffmeister, pp. 158–159; G/J, I, pp. 241–242 [I, pp. 69–71]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 76–80; Michelet², pp. 47–50 [I, pp. 55–59]); of considerable importance is the law of nations elaborated by Grotius as well as the strengthening of the experimental sciences in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, the inventions and discoveries, as well as the theorisation of moral

doctrines and political economy in Scottish thought. Nevertheless, “despite the fact that all of these aspects bear the name of ‘philosophy’, we wish to exclude them from the history of philosophy [...]. Inherent in all of these instances, however, is an element that they share with philosophy: ‘seeing for oneself’ (*das Selbstsehen*). [...] I must be involved myself; this is the great principle set over authority in any domain” (Hoffmeister, p. 165; G/J, I, p. 246 [I, p. 74]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 79–80; Michelet², pp. 50–51 [I, p. 59]).

These exclusions, which certainly favour a rigorous but a bit narrow conception of philosophy, were to lead to some impressive consequences, which I do not believe were always positive. It is enough to mention the limited resonance the great scientific revolution had for Hegel in the history of modern thought, a revolution which, from Copernicus to Galileo and beyond, deserved to share the merit of characterising modernity along with the “Protestant revolution”.

B. Philosophy and religion

The other expression of the history of the spirit to consider is religion. In this case too, there are grounds for considering it close to philosophy, and this gives rise to the question of whether it should be dealt with by the historian of philosophy and to what extent. The discussion on this subject is very long (Hoffmeister, pp. 166–221; G/J, I, pp. 246–264; Michelet¹, I, pp. 81–113; Michelet², pp. 51–76 [I, pp. 61–92]) and is subdivided into two phases: the first attempts to identify the relationships that link, but also differentiate, philosophy and religion in the multiplicity of their historical appearances; and, once this has been determined, the second phase aims to establish whether the historian of philosophy should deal with religion too or should exclude it from his philosophical history. Hegel concludes by choosing exclusion.

The general reason for the proximity between religion and philosophy lies in the fact that both “share the same object” (*Gegenstand*) and have the same content, God, while they differ in their way of dealing with it: religion expresses itself in myths, which are often related to the sensible, philosophy functions with reason (Hoffmeister, pp. 167–169; G/J, I, pp. 247–248 [I, pp. 74–76]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 81–84; Michelet², pp. 51–52 [I, pp. 61–63]). Hegel illustrates this relationship between religion and philosophy by using a series of oppositions: revelation-reason, divine spirit-human spirit, representation-thought, authority-freedom. The first term represents a feature of religion, the second a property of philosophy. The presence of oppositions justifies the conflicts frequently experienced by these two expressions of the spirit, although these conflicts are mitigated in the higher religious forms, which move increasingly closer to philosophy. Accordingly, on the plane of revelation, for example, in the less advanced religions, the revealer differs from the substance of the things that are revealed, whereas in the Christian religion, because of his divine nature, Christ coincides with the substance itself (Hoffmeister, p. 174; G/J, I, p. 172 [I, p. 224]; cf. Michelet¹, p. 92; Michelet², p. 58–59 [I, p. 71]). On the plane of spirituality, the faith by which this spirituality expresses itself becomes, in Luther’s interpretation, “the faith of spirit itself” [*“Glaube ist Glaube des Geistes selbst”*] and it makes the historical Christ of two thousand years ago coincide with the present, eternal Christ (Hoffmeister, pp. 177 and 179–180; G/J, I, pp. 248–249

and 175 [I, pp. 76]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 93–94; Michelet², pp. 59–60 [I, pp. 72–73]). As for the contrast, at times even contradiction, between representation (to which a mythical religion is related) and thought (which philosophy relies on), it presents itself in Xenophanes as a form of criticism of popular religion, which is further spiritualized in Socrates' "daimon". Towards the end of Greek thought, "the Neoplatonists translated the mythological images into the signification or mode of thought, and then employed mythology as a figurative language for their philosophy" (Hoffmeister, pp. 188–189; G/J, I, p. 255 [I, pp. 80–81]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 98–99; Michelet², p. 54 [I, pp. 77–78]). Finally, as for the conflict between the authority of religion and the freedom of philosophical thought, we see that, in "our Protestant Church" at least, what predominates is the principle that "religion must proceed based on one's own conviction and thus not rest on sheer authority" (Hoffmeister, p. 193; G/J, I, pp. 299–300 [I, p. 249]).

Despite the fact that the content is the same and it is possible to mitigate the difference between the various expressive forms, religion as a product of the spirit must be excluded from the historical treatment of philosophy. It is true, "mythology or, in general, the religious representations of all peoples" contain philosophemes, as has been demonstrated by the studies of "my friend Creuzer" and by ancient Neoplatonism (Hoffmeister, pp. 202–203; G/J, I, pp. 258–259 [I, p. 83]; Michelet¹, pp. 102–104); but philosophemes are imbued with sensible representations, casual and non-systematic thoughts, and so they are not yet philosophy. Against the "mythical philosophizing" adopted by Plato and Jacobi, and the symbolic use of numbers and geometric figures by the Freemasons – and previously by Pythagoras and the Chinese – Aristotle's statement that "it is not worth while to treat seriously of those whose philosophy takes a mythical form" is still valid (Hoffmeister, pp. 211–213; G/J, I, pp. 181–182; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 108–109; Michelet², pp. 73–74 [I, pp. 87–88]). Finally, as for religion in itself, in the various forms expressed by the poetry of Homer and the tragedians, it certainly contains profound thoughts, as was later the case of Goethe and Schiller's works, but only unintentionally and occasionally. The same is true of the works of the Fathers and then of the medieval Scholastics: "This is not thinking proceeding freely from itself", as philosophy requires, "we do not find free thoughts, self-given, self-constructed, but thoughts dependent on pre-suppositions of all sorts" (Hoffmeister, p. 218 [p. 159]; G/J, I, pp. 263–264; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 112–113; Michelet², p. 76 [I, pp. 91–92]). This is therefore the reason why philosophy is distinguished from religion and the history of philosophy must exclude any examination of religion as a product of the spirit.

C. Philosophy and popular philosophy

There is a final figure that has to be excluded: the product of the spirit that Hegel calls "popular philosophy", which he briefly discusses (Hoffmeister, pp. 221–223; G/J, I, pp. 187–189 [I, pp. 227–228]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 113–115; Michelet², pp. 76–78 [I, pp. 92–94]). This is not only represented by the current bearing this name in the German Enlightenment, but also by analogous manifestations which have appeared in the course of history: among the ancients, for example, he mentions Cicero, and among the moderns some "mystics and enthusiasts" (*Mystiker und*

Schwärmer) like Pascal. Their thought is philosophical both in its form and its content, but it is defective in its source (*Quelle*), which is variously constituted by “nature”: the “agreement of peoples” (*consensum gentium*), that is, the general agreement on which the law of peoples is founded, “moral instinct”, the “feeling of law and duty”, the human heart, the human inclinations, or the “arbitrariness of subjectivity”, rather than by the objectivity of thought, as is appropriate to philosophy. This is the conclusion of the most substantial part of the *Einleitung*, which consists in determining the concepts of “philosophy” and the “history of philosophy”. Due to the exclusion of the other products of the spirit (the particular sciences, art, mythology, religion, popular philosophy, politics, etc.), philosophy as a product of the spirit appears to be determinate, hence the content of the history of philosophy is determinate too.

1.1.3.6 Periodisation

What we call periodisation is defined, in Hegel’s words, as a “general division of the history of philosophy”. This is a topic which obviously does not consist of a mere subdivision into segments of time or a structured index of the different phases through which human thought has passed. It is, rather, both a historical and a theoretical topic in which there is perfect coincidence between what has happened over the course of time and the deeper meaning of these events. Indeed, the subdivision (*Einteilung*) proposed by Hegel is intended to address two fundamental problems: 1) when and where the history of philosophy started, how it began (*Anfang*); and 2) how it progressed (*Fortgang*). As we can see, these two problems require the determination not only of time and place but also of value. To begin means to depart from a previous phase which is not worthy of being defined as philosophical; to progress means a form of living which is development and maturing towards higher degrees. This kind of evaluation clarifies and offers a glimpse of the meaning of the apparent mere observation of facts, when Hegel declares that the beginnings of philosophy took place in Greece, in the West, not in the East (Hoffmeister, pp. 223–236; G/J, I, pp. 264–269 [I, pp. 88–91]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 115–122; Michelet², pp. 78–83 [I, pp. 94–100]), and progression lies in the transition from the ancient to the modern, from Greek philosophy to Germanic or Christian Germanic philosophy (Hoffmeister, pp. 236–252; G/J, I, pp. 269–276 [I, pp. 91–97]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 123–132; Michelet², pp. 83–89 [I, pp. 101–110]).

But let us turn to Hegel’s own words: “Our concern now is where we have to begin the history of philosophy. This issue was, to be sure, directly involved in our previous discussions. The history of philosophy begins where thought emerges freely for itself, where thought comes into existence in its freedom, where it tears itself loose from its submergence in nature, from the unity that it has with nature, and constitutes itself on its own account. The history of philosophy begins where thinking goes within itself, is at home with itself”. This freedom of thought is defined more precisely as absolute thought, identity with being. This is the simple, supersensible essence of the Judaic God; this is the being which, in philosophy, is

defined as the first principle of things, just as in the propositions: the first principle is water, or fire, or thought (Hoffmeister, p. 224; G/J, I, pp. 264–265 [I, p. 88]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 115–116; Michelet², p. 78 [I, p. 94]).

The freedom of thought from the sensible particular is paralleled by political freedom, where “the individual as subject on its own account knows itself as universal, as an individual within universality, as essential, as the sort of thing that, as individual, possesses an infinite worth” and, within the “consciousness of personality”, views itself as an “infinite worth” (Hoffmeister, p. 225; G/J, I, p. 265 [I, p. 88]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 116–117; Michelet², pp. 78–79 [I, p. 95]). In the course of history, therefore, philosophy has arisen in places where there are free constitutions. Hence not in the East (India or China), because here the individual “is not a person but is simply submerged, is determined only as negative, as submerged in the objective domain as such”. In the Oriental character, individuality is therefore conceived of in part as supersensible and in part as a sensible substance, hence “the highest state to which individuality can attain is eternal bliss as an immersion in this substance and a passing away of consciousness, thus a passing away of the distinction between substance and individuality – submergence in substance, and annihilation”. The individual has no will here; the will “is not a substantial will but one determined by caprice and natural accident (e.g. by caste) – a being without inner consciousness”. The East is characterised by the lack of all objective determination of the will, by the absence of rights, of ethicality, of the State. Moral consciousness is lacking too; the typical condition of a society in the East is a natural set of rules which is petrified and which identifies the highest nobility with the worst things; “in this situation, supreme caprice has the highest place” (Hoffmeister, pp. 227–228 [pp. 167–168]; G/J, I, pp. 266–267 [I, pp. 89–90]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 118–121; Michelet², pp. 79–81 [I, pp. 96–99]). As a result, philosophical knowledge does not flourish in the East, and Oriental thought must be excluded from the history of philosophy. Hegel still intends to provide some information on India and China, pointing out, however, that the so-called renowned Indian wisdom has been greatly exalted even though no one knows why.

“Philosophy proper starts in the West. There the spirit plumbs its own depths, is immersed in itself; there it establishes itself as free, is free in its own eyes. And only in those circumstances can philosophy exist. For the same reason too it is only in the West that we have free political institutions” (Hoffmeister, p. 232 [p. 171]; G/J, I, p. 269 [I, p. 91]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 121–122; Michelet², pp. 81–82 [I, pp. 99–100]). The theme of the “beginnings” is directly related to the theme of “progression”: that which begins is not destined to remain motionless but to proceed, although not at random but in a particular direction. Considering the whole historical course of philosophy, it is possible to outline “two great contrasting epochs”, that is, two great “expressions” of its progression: “Greek philosophy and Germanic philosophy”. This subdivision of progress is also a clear determination of value that profoundly penetrates the apparently simple observation of facts; all the more so because this progress may immediately seem to contradict the facts themselves. Germanic philosophy is “philosophy within Christendom as related to the Germanic nations, since Italy, Spain, France, England, and others, have received a new shape through

the Germanic nations” (Hoffmeister, p. 237 [p. 174–175]; G/J, I, p. 269; Michelet¹, I, p. 123; Michelet², p. 82 [I, p. 101]). The period of the Roman world is placed between the Greeks and the Germans. But “the Romans as such produced no proper philosophy of their own, any more than they had proper poets of their own. Even Roman religion itself is in fact also Greek religion”. Hence, while reasserting that there are only “two philosophies”, Hegel makes it clear that the Latin Middle Ages – when “philosophy was in the service of the Church” – also vanished after being incorporated into the nascent Germanism, just as the Roman world had been absorbed by the dying Greek world. Indeed, the formation of a judgement so predominates over the historical ascertaining of the facts that Hegel does not even notice the paradoxical nature of his conclusion: “The later Germanic, i.e. modern, philosophy begins with Descartes. Just so old is philosophy in Europe” (Hoffmeister, p. 238 [pp. 175–176]; cf. G/J, I, p. 311).

A closer look reveals that these two epochs present the following features: “The Greek world developed thought up to the point of the Idea, while the Christian or the Germanic world, to the contrary, grasped the thought of spirit”. Idea and Spirit (*Idee und Geist*) constitute the difference. “Idea” and “Spirit” should here be understood as the corresponding moments of the system as a whole, viewed from the vantage point of their final moment (since the history of philosophy really comes at the end of the history of the Idea-Spirit). Greek philosophy is the development of the Idea from its humblest and most abstract determinations (Thales’ water, Parmenides’ being) to the richest and most complete determinations in the system of Neoplatonism. Yet, Neoplatonism still lacks that definition of the Idea which is Spirit. “This principle of absolute self-awareness (*des absoluten Fürsichsein*) or freedom is the principle of the Christian world where the one characteristic is precisely that man as man has infinite worth” (Hoffmeister, pp. 238–242 [pp. 175–177]; cf. G/J, I, pp. 270–274 [I, pp. 92–95]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 127–128; Michelet², p. 85 [I, p. 105]). From a religious point of view, this value is expressed in the assumption of the human nature of the Christian man-God.

We will return later to examine these particular determinations in the development of the “two philosophies”. Yet, here Hegel maintains a general degree of analysis which sometimes appears obscure. Let us just point out that in the final page of his periodisation he again mentions the “two philosophies”, the Greek and the Germanic, but takes care to add an intermediate “time of fermentation” (*Mittelperiode der Gärung*) between the two. This period of preparation (*Vorbereitung*) of modern philosophy is represented by the thousand years which correspond to the Middle Ages, from the fall of Rome under the rule of Odoacer to the Thirty Years’ War, when Bacon, Böhme, and Descartes brought to light the difference between the new philosophy and all that which had preceded it: “*cogito ergo sum* are the first words of his system, and it is precisely these words which express modern philosophy’s difference from its all predecessors” (Hoffmeister, p. 252 [p. 183]; G/J, I, p. 203; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 131; Michelet², p. 88 [I, p. 109]).

1.1.4 *From Thales to Schelling: Historiographical Theses*

1.1.4.1 Oriental Philosophy

We have come now to the heart of the matter, so to speak, and we can follow Hegel's account of Western thought in its entirety, from its beginnings in Greece to its end-point in German idealism and Hegel's own system. This totality, this delimited whole, has a beginning and an end after a progress that does not evolve at random but follows a well-directed path. The inner part of this mobile totality is constituted by a multiplicity of moments, each of which has a particular place and its own sense for the place it occupies and the moment it expresses. The moments of this multiplicity are the philosophical systems that have followed on from one another. Since our object is to examine Hegel's history as a 'general' history, it is also important to keep in view the totality and the reasons for its internal structure and, at the same time, to emphasise the interpretative effects produced by this all-embracing view, namely, how it is able to explain the meaning of each moment. For example: it is important to determine the place taken by Plato within the totality he is part of (the relative totality of Greek philosophy, or the totality – even more limited and contained within the former totality – of Greek thought “from Thales to Aristotle”; or, conversely, the overall totality of all of human thought produced in the West); but it is equally important, with reference to Plato's position thus established, to illustrate how this precise position affects the interpretation of his thought in comparison with other interpretations. These two things go together, although for obvious reasons of space we cannot give equal attention to both of them. Hegel himself seems to indicate the greater importance he gives to the problems of placement: he deals at length with the precisely introduced and justified divisions, the groupings and, within them, the sequence of thinkers arranged according to an order which we perceive to be neither arbitrary nor random. Indeed, this binding and necessitating element in progress (*Fortschritt*) that a thinker represents when compared with previous thinkers is explicitly identified. Hence, the image of Plato which results from this is important, but still more so are the reasons that govern and illuminate this image.

We can immediately see this. Oriental philosophy is not included in Hegel's long history. It is simply the expression of “arid understanding”, a mere enumeration of determinations, and it evokes “a logic similar to the old Wolffian logic” (Michelet¹, I, p. 141; Michelet², p. 95 [I, p. 119]; cf. G/J, I, p. 369 [I, p. 106]). Despite these negative preliminary considerations, Hegel briefly depicts “Chinese philosophy”: Confucius and the fortune he enjoyed in the West in the age of Leibniz, (Michelet¹, I, p. 142; Michelet², p. 96 [I, p. 120]; cf. G/J, I, pp. 370–371 [I, pp. 107–108]) and Lao-Tzu; he dwells longer on Indian philosophy, taking care to point out its possible relations with Greek thought, which had already been underlined by Diogenes Laertius with his reference to the Gymnosophists.

1.1.4.2 Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Anaxagoras

But he is eager to proceed to “Greek philosophy”, which he introduces with a few pages concerning this particular milieu, Greece, where every man of culture – especially the German – feels at home (*heimatlich*), and which he divides into the following main periods: 1. From Thales to Aristotle: a period marked by long progress from the poor and abstract determinations of the early concepts up to Aristotle, to the idea, that is, to the “totality of knowledge in itself”. 2. Greek philosophy in the Roman world, where the synthesis of Aristotelian science, which had represented the fusion of all that which had been achieved hitherto, becomes fragmented “into particular systems, which are themselves totalities – the systems of Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism”, the latter of which is the “negative totality” that receives the legacy of the many previous divisions. 3. Neoplatonic philosophy, the “affirmative” element which “consummates the development of thought into an individual, intellectual world” (G/J, II, p. 5 [II, pp. 12–13]; Michelet¹, I, p. 188, Michelet², p. 128 [I, pp. 163–164]). Neoplatonism, which Hegel describes using the relatively unclear expressions quoted above, is a very problematic moment due to the historical position given to it, as we shall see later on.

The period from Thales to Aristotle is itself subdivided into three phases: from Thales to Anaxagoras, that is, from the first abstract determinations to the first important step represented by Anaxagoras’ *nous*; the Sophists, Socrates, and the Socratics, a phase dominated by the “principle of subjectivity”; and Plato and Aristotle, the phase of “Greek science”, “where objective thought shapes itself into a whole” (G/J, II, pp. 5–6 [II, p. 14]; Michelet¹, I, p. 189; Michelet², p. 129 [I, p. 165]).

After outlining the periodisation of the long chapter on Greek philosophy, Hegel begins his account by starting with those who were later defined as ‘the pre-Socratics’. His lengthy treatment makes direct use of sources. In the Michelet edition these sources are listed and reviewed. The first source is Plato, who, however, is too much of a philosopher; a better source is Aristotle, who is a philosopher as well as an erudite scholar (Hegel favours him not only as a source but also as an interpreter and his judgments are almost always in agreement with those of Aristotle); Cicero provides copious information but is lacking in philosophical spirit; finally he mentions Sextus Empiricus, Diogenes Laertius, and Simplicius (Michelet¹, I, pp. 189–191; Michelet², pp. 129–131 [I, pp. 166–168]).

We cannot analyse in detail the section covering the time from Thales to Anaxagoras and must limit ourselves to summarising the results Hegel seems to have reached. The first is the progressive intellectualization of the principle, evolving from the elements of the first “physicists” to the number of the Pythagoreans, the intellectual abstraction of being in Parmenides, the “invisible” atoms of Leucippus and Democritus, and the *nous* of Anaxagoras. The second observable result is the discovery of dialectic: that of Parmenides-Zeno, Heraclitus, and the Atomists. The third feature is a possible and relative internal structuring of this primitive philosophical thought. There is a Pythagorean “system”, an atomistic “system”, and an Anaxagorean “system”, in the sense that in all of these systems it

is possible to discern a series of more general and fundamental considerations on the “principle” (a logic which is merged with metaphysics), another series of clarifications regarding physical questions relating to the formation of the world (the philosophy of nature), and finally some reflections bearing on human life from an ethical and political perspective (the philosophy of the spirit). For Hegel, the most significant problematic moments are Pythagoras’ thought, the dialectic of the Eleatics and, by contrast, that of Heraclitus, and the Anaxagorean conception of *nous*.

Hegel devotes a paragraph to “Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans” (G/J, II, pp. 23–49 [II, pp. 31–54]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 219–274; Michelet², pp. 150–184 [I, pp. 194–239]), but he warns the reader that he will consider the thoughts common to the whole school, in its earlier phase at least. And, according to the testimony of Aristotle (Metaph. I, 5, 985 b 23–26) Hegel affirms that the main principle (*Hauptsatz*) of Pythagorean philosophy, “is simply that number is the being (*Wesen*) of things, and the organisation of the universe is a system of numbers and numerical relationships – in short that number as such is the being of all things”. And drawing again on Aristotle (Metaph. I, 6, 987b 14–16), linked to Plato’s mathematical thought, Hegel formulates the following interpretation: “Plato held that the mathematical realm has its place apart from the sensible world and apart from the Idea. It is *metaxý*, or between the two” (G/J, II, pp. 29–30 [II, p. 38]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 235–236; Michelet², p. 162 [I, pp. 208–209]). Pythagoreanism therefore represents an early idealisation of the principle, albeit with a limited value, as Hegel believes is clear from the identification of the principle with number, a typical element belonging to the abstractions of the understanding.

A much more important step on the path of abstraction is the “being” of the Eleatics (G/J, II, pp. 49–69 [II, pp. 54–70]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 275–319; Michelet², pp. 184–213 [I, pp. 239–278]). Hegel also deals with the Eleatics, and Parmenides in particular, in his *Science of Logic* in note 1, which is devoted to the three famous categories of being-nothing-becoming, and in his *Encyclopaedia*, notably in the commentary in paragraph 87, which corresponds to the logical treatment of the moment of being. Past interpreters tended to prefer the simpler phrasing of the *Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopaedia*³ to the text of the *Lectures*, which is longer and has a more complex structure, but is uncertain. Today the critical edition of the *Lectures* provides us with a more reliable text, which agrees with the brief passages from the works mentioned above, hence we can trust the *Lectures*, which is more historical and narrative in nature, and the theoretical works will serve to check and confirm our hypotheses. Although he declares he will examine them together, in practice Hegel does not ignore the differences between the various Eleatics. As for Xenophanes, he concentrates on the theological polemic against anthropomorphism (G/J, II, p. 54 [II, pp. 58–59]), and only vaguely touches on pantheism and Spinozism which – in the Michelet edition (Michelet¹, I, p. 297; Michelet², pp. 188–189 [I,

³In this regard, see A. Cavarero, *L’interpretazione hegeliana di Parmenide* (Trento, 1984), pp. 51–84 and 85–109; E. Berti, ‘La dialettica eleatica nell’interpretazione di Hegel’, in *La cultura filosofica della Magna Grecia* (Messina, 1989), pp. 21–42.

pp. 244–245]) and also in the *Science of Logic* – are considered to be proper to the principle discussed by Xenophanes that “nothing can come into being out of nothing, something can not originate from nothing” (G/J, II, p. 58 [II, p. 62]).⁴ As regards Parmenides, Hegel grants him preeminence over the other Eleatics and looks above all at the long initial fragment (Diels, B 1) on the “two paths of knowing” – “that of being” and “that of non-being” – and the fragments on the identity of thinking and being: “thinking and being are the same” (Diels, B 3, which is quoted by Plotinus too, *En.* V 1, 8: cf. G/J, II, pp. 54–58 [II, pp. 58–62] and *ibid.*, *Anmerkungen*, p. 268, 56, and 548–549). As for Zeno, Hegel discusses his long argument to confute movement and non-being, making him the inventor of dialectic (according to the Aristotelian tradition recently taken up by Kant).

In general, Hegel believes that the Eleatics represent a “tremendous advance. With the Eleatic school, thought, properly speaking, begins to be free for the first time on its own account, as essence, or as that which alone is true; now thought grasps its own self” (G/J, II, p. 53 [II p. 57]). And, in describing “the path of being” which the Goddess revealed to Parmenides, he states: “This is the principal definition. Only being is what is true, only being is, and the nothing is not at all. In this brief definition, negation in general comes under the head of this nothing. We have non-being before us in more concrete form – limit, finitude, restrictedness, particularity, and so on; for the Eleatics all this is negation. *Omnis determinatio est negatio* – that is Spinoza’s great dictum” (G/J, II, p. 56 [II, p. 60]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 288; Michelet², pp. 194–195 [I, p. 252]).

We must not forget, however, that for Hegel this intellectualization of the principle of being, albeit important, still remains the poorest abstraction, the emptiest of all determination. This is the – historical and logical – beginning of all philosophy. And this nothing, in contrast to being, is for the Eleatics really a simple negation. Parmenides’ dialectic is not movement, a transition from being into nothing obtained by overcoming, but it is the simple affirmation of being and hence the negation of its opposite. The contrary is simply error and nothing. Hegel blames Parmenides for this too. Therefore, observes Hegel, when Parmenides confronts the path of non-being and formulates opinions on the formation of the world, saying that this “system of phenomena” has “fire or flame, and the nocturnal” as its principle, he is in reality presenting a “deceptive system of the world” (G/J, II, p. 61 [II, p. 64]; Michelet¹, I, p. 291; Michelet², p. 197 [I, pp. 254–255]).

Hegel does recognise a certain movement in Zeno’s dialectic reasonings. For this reason, he separates Zeno from Parmenides and devotes much space to him. If Parmenides affirms the theory of being, and thus denies all antithesis to it, Zeno obtains the same result by hypothetically admitting the non-being as movement and showing what is contradictory in it, so through the path of negation he recovers the affirmation of the immobility of being (G/J, II, pp. 63–69 [II, pp. 66–70]; cf.

⁴G.F.W. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik* [1832], in *Gesammelte Werke* (Hamburg, 1968–...), vol. XXI, pp. 70–71 (*The Science of Logic*, transl. by G. Di Giovanni, Cambridge, 2010, pp. 60–61). See also G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* [1830], in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. XX, § 87, pp. 123–124.

Michelet¹, I, pp. 295–319; Michelet², pp. 200–213 [I, pp. 261–278]). Hegel mentions three of the four dialectic arguments handed down to us by Aristotle in *Phys.*, VI, 9 (the infinite divisibility of space, the Achilles paradox, the flying arrow). Hence, Zeno's dialectic, although laudable, does not depart from the results obtained by Parmenides, finally coming to the abstract immobility of the principle. "We can still call this dialectic 'subjective', because it takes place within the considering subject", it does not envelop the reality of things but only the reasoning assembled by thought. "The next step, now, is for this dialectic or this movement itself to be grasped as what is objective. That is the advance made by Heraclitus. So what is first is being. The second [moment] is becoming. Heraclitus says that the absolute is becoming. He went on to define becoming" (G/J, II, p. 69 [II, p. 70]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 319; Michelet², p. 213 [I, pp. 278–279]).

These expressions, which conclude the chapter on the Eleatics, also reveal a certain openness to the fundamental concept Hegel ascribes to Heraclitus, namely, the objective reality of the flowing, which is the dialectic coincidence of being and nothing: an objective dialectic. The new chapter is organised into three points. After some information on Heraclitus' life and the fragments that are preserved, Hegel examines the principle (G/J, II, pp. 71–75 [II, pp. 73–76]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 323–327; Michelet², pp. 216–218 [I, 282–285]); secondly, after the fragments concerning the principle, which reveal "purely logical" thought (*das rein Logische*), Hegel illustrates the fragments which show this thought from the point of view of a "philosophy of nature" (*naturphilosophisch*) (G/J, II, pp. 75–79 [II, pp. 76–81]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 328–337; Michelet², pp. 218–224 [I, pp. 285–293]; thirdly, he deals with "the relationship of subjectivity, of particular reason, to the universal reason, or to this process of nature" (G/J, II, pp. 80–81 [II, pp. 81–82]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 337–3342; Michelet², pp. 224–227 [I, pp. 293–297]), which corresponds to the fragments referring to the soul and its "participation in the universal *logos*" through knowledge. In Heraclitus too, therefore, we discover a "system", albeit with the necessary flexibility in our discussion and fidelity to the tiny portions of text handed down to us.

We can only dwell slightly longer on the considerations relating to the principle, positive considerations that Hegel repeats in his *Logic*.⁵ The principle is the following: "Heraclitus utters the bold and more profound dictum that being no more is than is non-being (τὸ ὄν οὐ μᾶλλον ἔστι τοῦ μὴ ὄντος), but not less either". Hegel then continues with a brief explanation: "everything flows, *panta rei*; in other words, nothing subsists or remains the same" (G/J, II, p. 71 [II, p. 73]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 323–324; Michelet², pp. 216–217 [I, pp. 282–283]). It is strange that the first fragment Hegel chooses to express Heraclitus' fundamental thought is taken from Aristotle (*Metaph.* I, 4, 985 b 4–9; see also G/J, II, *Anmerkungen*, pp. 284–285, 71, 937–939); he does not seem to notice that in these lines Aristotle does not attribute these words to Heraclitus but to Leucippus and Democritus, with reference to plenum and vacuum. This oversight was probably due to the strong impression the sense of these words had on Hegel as they agreed with the meaning he wanted to

⁵ Cf. *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 21, p. 70 [p. 60].

stress in the Heraclitean principle: the equivalence of being and non-being, one is no more than the other; therefore the slipping of being into non-being, and hence the flowing. There is no coincidence, with the danger of the reciprocal annihilation of the opposites, but their flowing, which attributes reality to both equally, and at the same time preserves both. In the Michelet edition (but not the *Logic*, Bd. 21, p. 70 [English transl., p. 60]), on the other hand, there are more decisive expressions with regard to coincidence: “Being and non-being are the same (*dasselbe*); everything is and yet is not. The truth only is as the unity of distinct opposites and, indeed, of the pure opposition of being and not-being” (Michelet¹, I, p. 323; Michelet², p. 216 [I, p. 282]). But in a lengthy discussion in the *Logic*,⁶ however, Hegel rejects the words “being and nothing are one and the same” as imperfect because the sense might seem to be that “the distinction is denied which yet patently occurs in the proposition at the same time; for the proposition says both determinations, being and nothing, and contains them as distinguished”. This is an important clarification in the Hegelian dialectic as a whole.

Hegel seems to be cautious about using the language of “coincidence” with reference to Heraclitus. His purpose is to find the greatest possible degree of proximity to the principle of his own dialectic in the dialectic of Heraclitus, to then point out its insufficiency, which is equally necessary as it separates the ancient from the modern. Heraclitus’ “great thought” is “still abstract”, but, “at the same time it is also the first concrete element, that is, the first unity of opposed characteristics. The latter are thus restless in this relationship, for it contains the principle of vitality. In this way it fills the gap which Aristotle pointed out in the other philosophies, which did not know what the principle of becoming is” (G/J, II, p. 72 [II, p. 74]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 324–325; Michelet², p. 217 [I, p. 283]). In any case, however objective this dialectic may be, as contrasted with Zeno’s Eleatic dialectic, “the true is still expressed abstractly” because of the indistinct nature of the flow of its moments and it requires very different formulations and elaborations.

After Heraclitus, another step on the path of progress is represented by the atomists Leucippus and Democritus (G/J, II, pp. 86–92 [II, pp. 87–93]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 353–368; Michelet², pp. 229–236 [I, pp. 299–310]) because of the objectivity in their thought, which characterises ontological determinations, the plenum of being of the atoms, and the vacuum of non-being. Of considerable importance is another point emphasised by Hegel: “We cannot see the atoms simply because of their smallness – just as they tell us today about molecules. But this is only a subterfuge. We cannot see the atom or the one because it is an abstraction of thought [...]. The principle of the one is wholly ideal, but not as if it were only in thoughts or in my head; instead it is ideal in this connection, that thought is the true essence of things. And for that reason the philosophy of Leucippus is no empirical philosophy and the atom is nothing empirical” (G/J, II, pp. 89–90 [II, p. 91]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 358–359; Michelet², p. 232 [I, pp. 303–304]). This interpretation is opposed to Tennemann’s, which is close to that of Rixner (see *Models*, III, p. 872, and above, p. 170).

⁶ *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 21, pp. 77–80, note 2 [pp. 66–69].

But the climax of this phase of Greek thought is Anaxagoras because of his doctrine of *nous*, which Hegel presents by applying the phrase formulated by Aristotle directly to him (*Metaph.* I, 4, 984b 15–20). Hegel renders the phrase as follows: “He appeared like a sober person among drunkards” (G/J, II, p. 93 [II, p. 94]; Michelet¹, I, p. 369; Michelet², p. 243 [I, p. 319]). In Anaxagoras the affirmation of *nous* is of much greater importance and weight than the rest of his doctrine: “Anaxagoras recognized *nous* as the absolute – thinking (*das Denken*), understanding (*Verstand*), reason (*Vernunft*). This principle is very important. It is the principle of self-determining activity, not that of being nor that of the becoming of Heraclitus, which is only process” (G/J, II, p. 99 [II, p. 101]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 382; Michelet², p. 250 [I p. 331]). A multitude of denominations appear in the above passage, suggesting equivalence between terms which usually indicate quite distinct moments (understanding – reason), so as to accentuate the importance of Anaxagoras’ *nous*, but perhaps also to denounce its indefiniteness. But Hegel does not refrain from presenting the positive aspects, which he derives from statements of Aristotle: to pursue objectives, to be the cause of the beautiful and the right, “and yet *nous* itself moves all things, and, so characterized, it is only the moving cause in general; he [Aristotle] goes on to say that *nous* is simple, without suffering or passivity, not susceptible to being determined by another, unmixed, and not standing in community with anything else” (G/J, II, p. 102 [II, p. 103]).

Hegel also lays special emphasis on the famous passage from *Phaedo* (97c–99a) and personally translates the long excerpt in which Socrates manifests his disappointment: the *nous* should only provide finalistic explanations, whereas, in some definite and actual instances, Anaxagoras, like the physicists, has recourse again to mechanical causes (G/J, II, pp. 102–104 [II, pp. 103–105]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 393–396; Michelet², pp. 257–258 [I, pp. 340–343]). Anaxagoras’ *nous* remains for Hegel something “completely formal” (G/J, II, p. 108 [II, p. 109]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 393; Michelet², p. 257 [I, p. 340]). But he also appreciates the doctrine of homoeomerics for their qualitative determinations, which he associates with the elements in chemistry “that prevails in our own time” (G/J, II, p. 105 [II, p. 107]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 389–390; Michelet², pp. 254–255 [I, p. 337]). There is light and shade in Anaxagoras too, therefore; perhaps there is more light where the absolute of the mind is more separate from the rest of the world.

1.1.4.3 The Sophists, Socrates, and the Socratic Schools

They are absolutely unconnected with the “physicists” and constitute a separate section; Socrates and the Socratic schools are in turn separated from Plato and Aristotle, with whom Greek philosophy achieves a definite and conclusive degree of progress. With respect to the group of the “physicists”, the Sophistic-Socratic age represents the moment of “subjective reflection”. The most typical aspect of this subjectivity is that “the subject is what thinks, what posits, and consciousness now has to reflect upon this, which involves thinking’s return into itself from out of objectivity, out of thinking only objects [...]. The return of thinking into itself is the consciousness

that the subject is what thinks, and bound up with this there is the specific form, that the content to be acquired must be an essential, absolute content" (G/J, II, p. 109 [II, p. 110]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 404–405; Michelet², pp. 263–264 [I, pp. 350–351]).

Hegel lingers over the theme of the consciousness of subjectivity which arises from a previous objectivity (that of the physicists) and which, nevertheless, must be re-acquired as a content of subjectivity itself. For Hegel, this is the speculative situation of the Sophists and of Socrates. Although it is disputable and closely connected to the need for a dialectic subdivision, this description of the Sophistic age allows Hegel to attribute to philosophy those figures and themes which – according to other considerations – had been placed in the arena of literary and rhetorical culture. Hegel does this by clarifying the speculative significance of their statements. Moreover, the historical phase corresponding to the Sophists and Socrates is the age of Pericles' Athens, which Hegel describes following the representation made by Plato in his *Protagoras* and comparing its ethical and educational ideals to the aspirations nourished by French and European Enlightenment culture. "The main purpose of the Sophists – what we call 'culture' (*Bildung*) and 'enlightenment' (*Aufklärung*) – consists precisely in learning to know the many points of view and giving them due weight" (G/J, II, p. 118 [II, p. 117]).

Hegel briefly discusses the two main Sophists, Protagoras and Gorgias. As to the former, he illustrates his principle of the human being viewed as "the measure of all things", which he judges to be "an important thesis. [...] Subjective thinking is essentially active and productive in the content, and this [importance of subjective thinking] is what reaches right down to the most recent philosophy. Kant says that we know only phenomena (*Erscheinungen*), meaning by this that what counts for us as the objective, or as having being, is to be considered only in relation to consciousness and is not [there] without this relation" (G/J, II, pp. 123–124 [II, pp. 120–121]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 429–431; Michelet², pp. 283–284 [I, pp. 373–375]). As to Gorgias, Hegel hints only at his dialectic, which is expressed in the well-known fragment quoted by Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. math.* VII, 65) and reported in the pseudo-Aristotelian (but for Hegel authentically Aristotelian) *De Xenophane, Zenone et Gorgia*. And he does so, it seems, in order to deliver a polemic against Tiedemann, for whom Gorgias, with his considerations on non-being, "went further than the sound human understanding can go"; here Hegel replies ironically: "that can be said of every philosopher", even of Copernicus, for all philosophers "go well beyond sound human understanding" (G/J, II, pp. 126–127 [II, pp. 123–124]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 435; Michelet², pp. 287–288 [I, pp. 378–379]).

Moving on from the Sophists to Socrates, the phase of subjectivity is not left behind but indeed is developed further. "This is the period of reflective thinking, of thought returning to itself. Authentic thinking thinks in such a way, however, that its content is no less objective than it is subjective. The freedom of consciousness is involved here in that human beings are at home with themselves in what is true, that what is true is their own – this is what freedom is. The principle of Socrates is that human beings have to discover and learn (*erkennen*) from themselves what their vocation and final goal are, and also what the world's purpose is, what is true in and for itself; they must attain truth by and through themselves" (G/J, II, p. 127 [II,

pp. 124–125]). This first page, outlining the “principle” of Socrates, also contains the fundamental themes of Hegel’s long exposition: consciousness, truth, freedom; these values constitute, one might say, the objective within the subjective, which can be achieved by thought reflecting on itself, or by the famous Socratic dictum “know thyself”, to which Hegel makes no reference here.

The Platonic dialogues, Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* and *Apology*, together with Aristotle’s testimony, are the main sources used and widely quoted by Hegel. He does not even pose the question of the criterion to be adopted in order to discern what extent of Plato’s work is to be ascribed exclusively to Socrates; he implicitly accepts the limits defined by Aristotle to distinguish the doctrine of the master from that of his great pupil. The biographical information concerning Socrates is not extrinsic to his thought; “his fate and his philosophy present themselves as a unity and must be treated as such” (G/J, II, p. 131 [II, p. 127]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 447; Michelet², p. 295 [I, p. 389]). The deep meaning of his thought seems to be embodied in his very person, becoming visible in it. Socrates – like his great contemporaries, starting with Pericles – “stands before us as a work of plastic, classical art that has raised himself to this level of perfection”, his life is similar to a work of art moulded by circumstances affecting his soul, which reacts to them and thus achieves a wonderful balance consisting of moderation and self-command (G/J, II, pp. 132–133 [II, pp. 128–131]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 452–453; Michelet², p. 298 [I, pp. 393–394]).

The “way and mode” (*Art und Weise*, not a ‘method’) of Socratic teaching are the two moments of irony and maieutics: the former is aimed at upsetting the uncritical and empirical certainties of an interlocutor (way of carrying on a conversation, merely negative attitude towards false knowledge, an attitude which is different from the irony shown by the moderns – for example by Friedrich Schlegel – resulting from Fichte’s philosophy of the Self, which is the absolute master of its own determinations, free either to assert or to extinguish them: G/J, II, pp. 136–137 [II, pp. 132–133]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 460–461; Michelet², pp. 302–304 [I, pp. 400–401]); as to maieutics, it is intended to help another to draw truth from himself. Indeed, a conversation is not an end in itself, but its task is to bring forth truth.

“The next point, which is the main thing and what the questioning was supposed to elicit, is above all the derivation of something universal from the particular” (G/J, II, p. 138 [II, p. 134]). This fundamental point distinguishes Socrates from the empirical subjectivity of the Sophists. “Socrates set the thought that is universal in and for itself against the inwardness that is selfish (*particulär*). In doing so he stands over against the Sophists who say that the human being is the measure of all things, whereas for Socrates it is rather spirit (*Geist*) that is their measure” (G/J, II, p. 143 [II, p. 138]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 467–468; Michelet², pp. 306–307 [I, pp. 406–407]). On this point Hegel is unwavering and shows that he is fully aware of its importance; nevertheless, he leaves it in Socrates’ indefinite language and thought, collecting varied testimonies from the vast material provided by Xenophon, without ever coming to a more definite determinacy. However Socrates expresses the rather stable and unequivocal conviction that the positive and affirmative element of his dialectic is none other than the good (*das Gute*), insofar as it is brought forth by

knowing (*das Wissen*), by consciousness (G/J, II, p. 140 [II, p. 135]). The good and the *science* of good, virtue and its teaching constitute Socrates' deepest convictions and the most outstanding subject of his research.

But this is also the reason why his statements are more indeterminate. Hegel underlines this aspect again and again. "For Socrates, however, the good as such still remained indeterminate, and for him the ultimate determinacy – the determining and what does the determining – is what we generally call subjectivity" (G/J, II, p. 144 [II, p. 138]). Indeed, he formulates similar remarks in other places, where indeterminacy is also identified with unilaterality and deficiency. In this regard, Hegel mentions Aristotle's criticisms, showing that he fully shares them (*Magna moralia*, I, 1, 1182a 15–23; *Eth. Nic.* VI, 13, 1144b 18–21, 28–30). These state that the fact that "Socrates placed virtue exclusively in knowing" excludes all "alogical aspects of the soul", which constitute a non-negligible part of human life, whose rule requires that we should use other means in addition to those offered by knowledge. In addition, Hegel does not fail to cite the criticism formulated by Aristophanes in *The Clouds*, which leads us to the last theme he develops in the long paragraph on the tragic 'destiny' of Socrates' death (G/J, II, pp. 148–150 [II, pp. 142–144; Michelet¹, I, pp. 481–486; Michelet², pp. 323–326 [I, pp. 426–430]).

Hegel expresses his disagreement with Tennemann (see *Models*, III, pp. 873–874), who considered Socrates to be innocent, the victim of an unfair trial; he carefully examines the two accusations brought against him, namely, that "Socrates did not consider to be gods those that the Athenian people accepted as gods"; and that "he led youth astray" (G/J, II, pp. 155–160 [II, pp. 148–153]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 497–508; Michelet², pp. 327–334 [I, pp. 431–440]). These accusations were right since they agreed with the ethical convictions of the Athenian people of the time, whom Socrates had attacked with his innovative ideas.⁷ As said above, according to Hegel, the "genuinely 'tragic' situation" (the "rational misfortune") does not lie in the fact that an innocent man was punished but in the fact that two "justified and ethical" powers "came into collision" (G/J, II, p. 130 [II, pp. 126–127]). "The Athenian people upheld the right of their law, of their own custom and religion, against this attack, against this offense on the part of Socrates. [On the one hand,] Socrates offended against the spirit or against the ethical and juridical life of his people, and this positive offence was necessarily punished. On the other hand, Socrates is no less the heroic figure who holds on to the right, the absolute right of

⁷A *mémoire* entitled *Observations sur les causes [...] de la condamnation de Socrate* by Nicolas Fréret (1688–1749), which had been delivered before the *Académie royale des inscriptions* in 1736, came out posthumously in 1809. Fréret, who – like Sigismund Friedrich Dresig, Jean-Jacques Garnier, Charles Palissot de Montenoy – judged Socrates' condemnation to be just, is numbered among the first 'demythologizers' of the figure of Socrates, destined however to be overwhelmed by the renewed idealization of the Greek martyr which took place in the nineteenth century thanks to Schleiermacher and Hegel. See the new edition of these texts in *De Socrate iuste damnato. La nascita del problema socratico nel XVIII secolo*, ed. by M. Montuori (Rome, 1981). On Fréret and his historiographical work on ancient thought, cf. *Models*, III, pp. 72–73; for the interpretation of Socrates, see also C. Borghero, 'Il ritorno rimosso. Per un bilancio di dieci anni di studi di storia della filosofia sul secolo XVIII', *Rivista di filosofia*, LXXXIII (1991), pp. 431–432.

self-consciousness on its own account, the right of his own self-certain spirit. Now that the new principle has come to collide with the ethical life of his people, with the conviction of the day, this reaction by [him as] an individual was necessarily bound to take place". A little further on he observes: "We are finished with Socrates [...]. He experienced the glory of Athens and the beginning of the people's ruin; he witnessed the greatest flowering of Athens and the onset of its misfortunes" (G/J, II, pp. 162 and 164 [II, pp. 154–156]; Michelet¹, I, pp. 514 and 516; Michelet², pp. 338–340 [I, pp. 446–448]).

There were many Socratics. Hegel puts them all together in a separate section, with which he closes the Sophistic-Socratic age (G/J, II, pp. 165–182 [II, pp. 156–175]), and he limits himself to mentioning the major figures, grouped into the three schools: the Megaric school (Eucleides, Stilpo, Eubulides, Diodorus, Menedemus); the Cyrenaic school (Aristippus, Theodorus, Anniceris, Hegesias); and the Cynic school (Antisthenes, Diogenes of Sinope). Their general feature is that "we find in them only a more abstract grasp of the Socratic mode, one more definite but therefore more one-sided, and appearing in a diversity of types". Another interesting aspect of their thought is the "abstractness and indefiniteness" of their dialectic method, which – particularly for the Megarics – Hegel compares to that of the Eleatics (G/J, II, p. 165 [II, pp. 156–158]; cf. Michelet¹, I, pp. 519–520; Michelet², p. 341 [I, pp. 449–450]). Hegel illustrates the ethical principle characterising each school: "the simple good or, abstractly, the good in simple shape" of the Megarics, which is more abstract, if it were possible, than Socrates' good; the pleasure (*Vergnügung*) of the Cyrenaics, with which Hegel seems in some measure to sympathise; the restriction of one's needs to barely natural needs, typical of the Cynics, which reveals the abstractness of the naturalistic principle. Dialectic, especially in the case of the Megaric school, is defined as eristic and is exemplified using some famous arguments (the Sorites, the Bald Man, etc.), following, among other doxographic sources, Aristotle's *De Sophisticis Elenchis*. In Michelet's edition of the *Lectures* Hegel dwells much longer upon this dialectic and upon the biographical anecdotes reported by the doxographers (Michelet¹, I, pp. 516–560; Michelet², pp. 340–369 [I, pp. 448–487]).

1.1.4.4 Plato

"The development of philosophic science as science (*Wissenschaft*) [...] begins with Plato" ("and with Aristotle" adds another redaction from the *Vorlesungen*) (Michelet², p. 369 [II, p. 1]; cf. Michelet¹, II, p. 11]). Hegel had expressed himself with similar words in his periodisation of Greek philosophy: "Plato and Aristotle, Greek science, where objective thought shapes itself into a whole. Plato's thought is pure but concrete – it is the idea or thought, but the thought is inwardly self-determining. With Aristotle too the idea is pure, but it is purely efficacious (*wirksam*) and active (*tätig*) – it is thought that is self-determining through activity. It is not an abstraction as thought is for Plato, where only the idea is in the form of its universality. In Aristotle [we have] the idea in the form of its efficacy (*Wirksamkeit*), or its

self-determining" (G/J, II, p. 6 [II, p. 14]). The distinction between Plato and Aristotle basically follows tradition, although it is formulated using Hegel's speculative terms in their full significance: science, idea, totality, efficacy in reality.

The introductory words – contained in the chapter specifically devoted to Plato – are hardly more numerous and they take up a mere page. Immediately after, as usual, Hegel starts to describe the life and works of the author. The *Lectures* reflect the final interpretation of Plato found in Hegel's mature thought, from the final years in Jena (*Phenomenology*) onwards, a position which is preceded, however, by an interpretative history that starts in Hegel's youth at the *Stift* in Tübingen and, as a result of his long-running interest in Plato, continues up to his writings containing the outline of the Jena system and preceding the *Phenomenology*. In more recent years, this history has been investigated and narrated by Düsing, to whom we refer the reader (Düsing, pp. 68–83). Summarising the fundamental aspects of his position, we can say that Hegel moves from an aesthetic Platonism and a Platonism of *eros* – specific to the Tübingen years and based above all on his reading of the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* ("Precise information attests that Hegel, together with Hölderlin, Fink, Renz, and other friends, had read and discussed Plato: some attempts at translation he had made in that period are still preserved"⁸) – to an interpretation of Plato centred on the *Parmenides* and its dialectic. But the dialectic interpretation also went through at least two phases. At first Hegel saw the *Parmenides* only as an expression of pure scepticism, in parallel with the meaning of dialectic expressed in the Kantian doctrine of ideas: this reflects the negative aspect of Platonic thought, whose positive side was a simple need for the Absolute introduced, in a negative way, by scepticism itself. But in a second phase Hegel came to understand the *Parmenides* in a positive sense: it expresses a "speculative dialectic" on which metaphysics converges, as we shall see below. This is very close to the dialectic peculiar to Hegel, albeit with some differences.

Hegel's account can thus be briefly represented. As we have already said, Hegel presents Plato's life and works first of all (Michelet¹, II, pp. 13–19; Michelet², pp. 370–374 [II, pp. 2–9]; G/J III, pp. 1–6 [II, pp. 176–181]). He then points out a series of difficulties that we encounter reading these works: external and only apparent difficulties, such as their authenticity, the oral teachings, esotericism, but also more substantial aspects relating to the dialogical form of these writings and to the use of myth (Michelet¹, II, pp. 19–31; Michelet², pp. 374–383 [II, pp. 9–21]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 6–8 [II, 181–184]). There follow two long – and again introductory – paragraphs: one concerns the *value* of philosophy in Plato, "the estimation in which Plato held philosophy", the other concerns the *nature* of knowledge and *ideas* in general (Michelet¹, II, pp. 31–42; Michelet², pp. 383–390 [II, pp. 22–32]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 8–9 [II, p. 184]). Although preliminary, these paragraphs include essential problems, such as that of "learning as recollection", which is related to the theme of the "immortality of the soul" (Michelet¹, II, pp. 42–56; Michelet², pp. 390–400 [II, pp. 32–46]; cf. G/J III, pp. 14–18 [II, pp. 188–192]) and that concerning the nature

⁸ K. Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben* (Berlin, 1844), p. 40.

of ideas and the degrees of knowledge (Michelet¹, II, pp. 56–61; Michelet², pp. 400–404 [II, pp. 45–49]). Finally Hegel deals with the content of knowledge, the systematic structure of Platonic thought, subdivided into three clearly distinct and numbered paragraphs: 1. Dialectic (especially in the *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, and *Philebus*); 2. Philosophy of Nature (interpretation of the *Timaeus*); 3. Philosophy of Spirit (the human being's ethical nature in the *Republic*) (Michelet¹, II, pp. 62–86, 86–105, and 105–132; Michelet², pp. 404–420, 420–434, and 434–455 [II, pp. 49–71, 71–90, and 90–117]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 21–36, 37–49, and 49–58 [II, pp. 195–207, 207–218, and 218–225]).

Hegel minimizes the first difficulties presented by the reading of the Platonic writings and leaves them to the “Hypercriticism” expressed by Schleiermacher (a discussion of the authenticity of some dialogues), Brandis, and other philologists of the time (Michelet¹, II, pp. 20–21; Michelet², pp. 376–377 [II, p. 10–11]). The very question of the relationship between the doctrine of Socrates and that of Plato is solved by including it in a more general problem, namely, that a later philosopher must necessarily assume upon himself the principles of previous philosophies. This does not result in a sort of “eclectic philosophy”, but rather it constitutes the junction where the previous abstract and unilateral principles are really and concretely unified (Michelet¹, II, pp. 22–23; Michelet², pp. 377–378 [II, pp. 12–14]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 6–7 [II, p. 182]).

For Hegel, more serious difficulties arise from the dialogical form in which Plato expressed his thought. A conversation always involves an element of the random, which is in contrast to the logical necessity specific to reasoning. Hegel wishes to go beyond these contingencies in the art of narration, which is only apparently a conversation, but really functions like a catechistical questioning, in which the answers are already prescribed in the questions (Michelet¹, II, p. 26; Michelet², pp. 379–380 [II, pp. 16–17]). This tactic, which consists in distinguishing between what is essential and its contingent coating, is also in agreement with his evaluation of the mythical contents, which are of considerable importance in Platonic discourse. The ancient Neoplatonists, with their allegorical interpretations of myths, found too much in Plato; the moderns, like Tennemann (see *Models*, III, pp. 876–879), found too little in him since they understood the pure discussion of speculative concepts (like those contained in *Parmenides*) as mere abstract thoughts and niceties, whereas they appreciated concepts that are expressed in a still representative manner, thus reducing Platonic thought to the metaphysics we cultivated in earlier times (causes, proofs of the existence of God, etc.). This is the figure of God the Creator we find in the *Timaeus*, the representative expression of a philosopheme, which is literally contained in Plato's text but in fact does not belong to his thought. This also applies to Plato's statements concerning the parts forming the soul, reminiscence related to preexistence, and ideas as belonging to God's thought (Michelet¹, II, pp. 28–31; Michelet², pp. 381–382 [II, pp. 18–21]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 7–8 [II, pp. 182–183]).

After these general indications regarding a methodology, so to speak, for reading Plato's works, Hegel illustrates, once again, two preliminary concepts: the value of philosophy within the awareness Plato possessed of it, and the nature of knowledge and ideas in general (Michelet¹, II, pp. 31–38 and 38–61; Michelet², pp. 383–386

and 386–404 [II, pp. 21–28 and 28–49]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 8–12 and 13–21 [II, pp. 184–187 and 187–195]). As evidence of the supreme value Plato attached to philosophy, Hegel mentions the task of governing the State which is assigned to it in the famous pages of the *Republic*. This arises from the formal character of philosophy, consisting in dealing with general principles and therefore with more universal values, on which the government of the State must be based. Seen in this perspective, the value of philosophy also depends on its contents. Platonic philosophy can be related to the consciousness of the supersensible – as is shown by the myth of the cave, on which Hegel dwells at length – and therefore includes the assignment of political governance to those who possess philosophical knowledge; which does not mean that in fact a philosopher in himself is always a good ruler. Marcus Aurelius did not improve the Roman empire; and Frederick the Great – who had been educated in Wolff’s metaphysics and French philosophy and poetry – failed to transform into a public concern that which remained instead a specific private question (*eine besondere Privatsache*) (cf. G/J, III, p. 11 [II, p. 186]; Michelet¹, II, pp. 35–36; Michelet², pp. 385–386 [II, p. 26]).

More interesting and directly pertaining to the theme under consideration are Hegel’s observations on the nature of knowledge and ideas in general. Knowledge has the idea as its object. And “the idea is nothing else than that which is known to us more familiarly by the name of the Universal (*das Allgemeine*), not understood formally, not as the formal Universal, which is only a property of things, but as implicit and explicit existent, as reality, as that which alone is true” (Michelet¹, II, p. 40; Michelet², pp. 387–388 [II, p. 29]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 21–22 [II, pp. 195–196]). Hegel will constantly reiterate this ontological character of that which Plato calls *eidos* and which can be rendered with “species” or “kind”. There are two possible misunderstandings of the idea. The first derives from those who can only conceive of the sensible as real. They view the idea either as an attribute of sensible objects that exists only in the mind or as a world of objects which are outside us but, nevertheless, are envisaged in analogical relation to sensible existence; this rough interpretation is inspired by the very way in which Plato expresses himself when he considers the idea to be the model of sensible reproduction. The second misunderstanding consists in conceiving the idea as being situated not outside our consciousness but as an “ideal of our reason”, without reality. In the first case we are confronted with a representation of extra-worldly things, whereas in the latter case this place beyond reality is reason itself, so that the idea would be the object of an intuition, as though it were an object of an aesthetic nature: nothing but an intuition brought forth by some inspired genius and belonging to the sphere of “enthusiasm” (Michelet¹, II, pp. 40–41; cf. Michelet², pp. 389–390 [II, pp. 30–31]). It seems to me that in the first case Hegel intends to be polemical against those coarsely objectivistic interpretations which project onto the model itself the attributes of the sensible reproduction, which is the only reality these interpreters are able to envisage; and in the second case against a Kantian interpretation (ideal of reason) or a Schellingian interpretation (aesthetic intuition) in which the ontological-rational, discursive, or dialectic attributes of ideas are excluded. We do not *possess* ideas, “they are developed in the mind through the apprehending knowledge”. The simplicity of the

intuition must be understood as the simplicity of a result achieved through a “rational developed form” (Michelet¹, II, p. 41; Michelet², pp. 389–390 [II, p. 31]).

What are the ways by which individual consciousness grasps the universal of the idea in knowledge? Here we come to the theory of reminiscence, which Hegel basically considers as a sort of mythical representation – in the *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus* – related to the equally mythical doctrine of the immortality of the soul (Michelet¹, II, pp. 42–54; Michelet², pp. 390–399 [II, pp. 32–43]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 14–18 [II, pp. 188–192]). But what does reminiscence (*Wiedererinnerung*) really mean? Recollecting is associated with the reproduction of a representation; “but recollection (*Erinnerung*) has another sense, which is given by its etymology, namely that of making oneself inward (*sich-innerlich-machen*), that of going inward (*Insichgehen*), and this is the profound meaning of the word in thought” (Michelet¹, II, p. 44; Michelet², pp. 391–392 [II, pp. 34–35]; cf. G/J, III, p. 14 [II, pp. 188–189]). In knowledge, that which manifests itself externally as manifoldness is made interior, and we do this by going inward, delivering it to our consciousness.

Hegel attaches considerable importance to the process of knowledge that takes place in education, in acquiring culture, and in the act of learning on the part of the soul: led by reminiscence we understand this knowledge as a path of interiorisation into consciousness. Hegel also illustrates the cognitive process with a lengthy explanation of a passage from the *Republic* (VI, 509C–511E) containing the image of the Divided Line (Michelet¹, II, pp. 57–60; Michelet², pp. 401–408 [I, pp. 46–48]). It presents a noteworthy and convincing interpretation of the two moments (*dianoia* and *noesis*) of the intelligible degree (the sensible degree presents no problems). Both of them, even the *noesis*, are discursive knowledge. The moment of *dianoetic* discursiveness moving from hypotheses, which is exemplified by the mathematical process, is translated with *Verstand* or *Räsonnement* – its equivalent in the language of the Enlightenment – which is free from sense but not from figures and representations, although they are viewed as merely auxiliary to thought. For this reason, the understanding’s reasoning takes place on a lower degree than the *dialegethai* of the *noesis* (translated with *Vernunft*), which does not move from hypothetical presuppositions strictly speaking (as in the case of mathematical understanding), but merely rests on sound bases in order to achieve the principle *anhypotheton*, the principle of the whole, in itself and for itself, and then redescend to the conclusions, always passing only through ideas and ending up in ideas. This is true dialectic. Of considerable importance in Hegel’s exegesis therefore is the distinction between the intellectual knowledge of mathematics and the rational knowledge of philosophical dialectic, in which discursiveness does not give way to intuition, but gives rise to a knowledge of ideas, through ideas, within a superior rational discursiveness.

This point of the *Republic*, which Hegel rightly considers to be of decisive importance for understanding Plato, is placed at the beginning of the analysis of the first moment (logic and dialectic) of the Platonic system, which is represented more clearly by the later production of the *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, and *Philebus*. We find here an explanation of that “speculative dialectic” which, according to Hegel, constitutes the central core of Plato’s entire thought.

In the *Sophist* Hegel emphasises Plato's criticism of two types of dialectic: one is dialectic understood "in the ordinary sense", typical of the Sophists and understood as the equivalence of all sensible opinions, even those conflicting with one another; the other is the dialectic typical of the Eleatics, which is founded on the principle that "only being is, and non-being is not", denies the existence of the false (non-being is not), and maintains the immobility of the true in being (Michelet¹, II, pp. 71–74; Michelet², pp. 415–416 [II, pp. 63–66]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 26–28 [II, pp. 199–200]). Plato therefore draws a distinction between his own dialectic and both of these erroneous forms of dialectic, and, using the five genera, comes to the following result: "that non-being, further determined, is the essence of the 'other' (unity, identity with oneself – and difference); that genera, *ghene* – the universalities which can also be called ideas – are mingled (unity of being and non-being, therefore non-unity), and that being and otherness penetrate (*dielelythóta*) all things and each other; that otherness partakes of being, inhabits it and, due to this inhabiting, is not the same as that in which it inhabits, but is different and, as it is something other than being, it is necessarily non-being" (Michelet¹, II, p. 75; cf. Michelet², p. 417 [II, pp. 66–67]; see also G/J, III, pp. 28–30 [II, pp. 200–202]; cf. *Soph.* 259a–b). And Hegel insists: this way of arguing, through pure thoughts, constitutes Plato's true philosophy, "the inmost reality and true greatness of Platonic philosophy". We can say that "this is the esoteric side of Plato's philosophy and the other side is exoteric". But this distinction would be inappropriate, because it would suggest that Plato has two philosophies, while, on the contrary, there is only one philosophy: "the esoteric side is the speculative element that is written and printed but that remains still something hidden from those who have no concern to grasp it; it is not a secret and yet is hidden" (Michelet¹, II, pp. 76–77; Michelet², pp. 417–418 [II, pp. 67–68]; cf. G/J, II, pp. 30–31 [II, pp. 202–203]).

Analogous observations are applied to *Philebus*. There are general concepts, pure thoughts, emerging as such from the discussion on pleasure: unlimited-limiting-what is mingled from both-cause (which produces what is mingled). Dialectic is passing through these pure thoughts (Michelet¹, II, pp. 77–79; Michelet², pp. 418–419 [II, pp. 68–70]). But for Hegel the supreme example of dialectic is offered by the discussion of "hypotheses" in *Parmenides*, namely, that kind of "exercise" Parmenides exhorts the young Socrates to practice, and whose result, according to Hegel, is the following: "Whether the one is or is not, it, as also the many [being, appearance, becoming, rest, motion, arising and perishing, etc.], in relation to themselves and in relation to one another – all of them both are and are not, appear and do not appear" (Michelet¹, II, p. 81; Michelet², p. 412 [II, p. 59]; cf. *Parm.* 166C). "This result may seem strange" and simply negative, observes Hegel, but "the Neoplatonists, and more especially Proclus, regard the result arrived at in the *Parmenides* as the true theology, as the true revelation of all the mysteries of the divine essence" (Michelet¹, II, p. 82; Michelet², p. 412 [II, p. 60]; cf. G/J, III, p. 35 [II, p. 206]). And a few lines above Hegel himself, had expressed the meaning of this Platonic "exercise": the one and the many "they show themselves dialectically and are really the identity with their 'other'; and this is the truth. An example is given in Becoming: in Becoming Being and non-being are in inseparable unity, and

yet they are also present there as distinguished; for Becoming only exists because the one passes into the other" (Michelet¹, II, p. 82; Michelet², p. 412 [II, pp. 59–60]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 35–36 [II, pp. 206–207]).

With this Hegel perhaps does not intend to affirm that Plato's dialectic is identical to his own: not in all his works and not always does Plato achieve the heights of *Parmenides*; and these heights represent more faithfully the meaning of the dialectic synthesis – which, through its truth, is naturally the same in Plato and in Hegel – than historical Platonic dialectic, within the speculative situation of Plato himself.

Plato's philosophy of nature is contained in the *Timaeus*, which Hegel provides a faithful and orderly account of. In his eyes, this work is the result of a re-elaboration Plato made of a text written by a Pythagorean author; he defends its unitariness and consistency, disagreeing with certain critics, like F.A. Wolf, who regarded it instead as a composition of various texts, the same practice which, according to Wolf's well-known theory, was allegedly at the basis of Homer's poems. He regretfully acknowledges the mythical character of the composition and makes constant efforts to draw from it philosophical concepts that can be exploited: the good therefore comes to be the most adequate concept for indicating the Platonic representation of the personal God without envy; and the fact that God comes face-to-face with the visible, movable, and disorderly reality of matter constitutes an affirmation of the immediate in a naïve representation, which should be interpreted speculatively. This is therefore the procedure adopted by Hegel for interpreting Plato's text, which he structures into the following themes: the divine principle of the good; the reduction of material disorder to the rational connection between the elements; the mathematical constitution of the soul of the world, space, time; and, after this section of physics, animal physiology, in which, however, for Hegel, "he [Plato] proceeds in a childlike way" which cannot be easily used today. Nevertheless, from this latter part too Hegel thinks it is possible to derive a valid speculative principle, that of "vitality", which one would hope, he observes, can also be used by physiologists of the present time: in short, "the contemplation of nature as living" (Michelet¹, II, pp. 102–103; Michelet², pp. 431–432 [II, pp. 87–88]; cf. G/J, III, p. 47 [II, pp. 215–216]).

Hence, just as the *Timaeus* contains Plato's "philosophy of nature", so the *Republic*, thanks to its dominant themes of ethics and politics, contains the "philosophy of mind". Hegel immediately affirms that he could find in Plato "no developed consciousness of the organization of the theoretic mind" (GJ, III, p. 49 [II, p. 218]; Michelet¹, II, p. 105; Michelet², p. 434 [II, p. 90]), whereas the practical domain, the fulfilment of the spirit in ethics and politics, represents the most brilliant moment of Platonic thought. It seems to us that here Hegel takes care not to burden the remote Plato with the systematic structuring of his own construction; terms like 'dialectic', 'nature', 'spirit', 'theoretical mind', 'practical mind', and so forth, designate subdivisions he adopts here for the sake of clarity, in order to be understood by an audience accustomed to his terminology. But, albeit in different ways, the problems always remain the same, even in Plato, namely, those problems which were to be addressed by Hegelianism in a modern context.

In this speculative perspective – just to give an eloquent example – Hegel underlines a remarkable difference between Plato and the moderns: compared with the moderns, Plato reveals his deficiency in subjectivity. This is particularly noticeable on the plane of ethics, namely, in an immediate adoption of the rules governing the collective behaviour as norms of individual behaviour. All morality relating to the individual is necessarily translated into the objective laws of the *polis*. And, from an historical point of view, Hegel observes that when subjective freedom tried to prevail in Greece, it always turned to disorder and arbitrariness. “The main thought which forms the groundwork of Plato’s *Republic* is the same which is to be regarded as the principle of common Greek morality, namely, that established morality has in general the relation of the substantial, and therefore is maintained as divine [...]. The determination which stands in contrast to this substantial relation of the individual to established morality, is the subjective will of the individual, reflective morality. This exists when individuals, instead of being moved to action by respect and reverence for the institutions of the state and the fatherland, from their own convictions [...] come of themselves to a decision [...]. This principle of subjective freedom is a later growth, it is the principle of our modern days of culture: however, it also entered into the Greek world, but as the principle of destruction of Greek state-life” (Michelet¹, II, pp. 113–114; Michelet², pp. 440–441 [II, pp. 98–99]; cf. G/J, III, p. 52 [II, pp. 219–220]).

Despite this lack of “subjectivity”, Hegel admiringly presents the ethical and political doctrines contained in the *Republic*. He formulates some further preliminary considerations – analogous to those we have mentioned above – which can be summarised as follows. The naïve beginning of Plato’s work relating to justice, namely, that it becomes clearly visible in the larger size of the body of a State – rather than in the smaller size of an individual – actually reveals “the nature of the thing”, for “in the state alone is justice present in reality and truth” (Michelet¹, II, pp. 106–107; Michelet², pp. 434–435 [II, pp. 91–92]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 51–52 [II, p. 219]). Plato’s State is not the State of nature, and its law is not the law of nature; Hegel therefore delivers a polemic against the moderns and the absurdity of their “fiction of a state of nature [*Fiktion des Naturzustandes*]” typical of the doctrine of natural law (Michelet¹, II, pp. 107–109; Michelet², p. 436 [II, pp. 92–93]). Plato’s State is not even an “ideal” State, if “ideal” is understood in the sense proposed by “monks” and “Quakers”, since “a set of melancholy specimens such as these could never form a nation”; and it does not even consist in a “perfect constitution” appropriate to all times and all peoples (Michelet¹, II, pp. 109–113; Michelet², pp. 437–440 [II, pp. 94–98]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 50–51 [II, pp. 218–219]).

Plato’s State is exactly that required by Greek ethicality, which – after the general considerations we have summarised above – Hegel outlines closely following Plato’s thought in the *Republic* (in addition, he briefly mentions only the *Laws*: Michelet¹, pp. 122–123; Michelet², p. 448 [II, p. 108]). The structure of the three classes corresponding to the three parts of the soul which is reflected in the four virtues of wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice; the means to preserve the State, which are to be found especially in education; the exclusion of all subjective element in denying the individual the right to choose freely the class he belongs to,

and, moreover, in denying private property and family (Michelet¹, II, pp. 113–127; Michelet², pp. 440–452 [II, pp. 98–112]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 54–58 [II, pp. 222–225]). Hegel concludes by reasserting Plato's reasons for this "want of subjectivity" and contrasting "Plato's principle" with the modern "principle of the conscious free will of individuals", which is proper to Rousseau (Michelet¹, II, p. 129; Michelet², pp. 453–454 [II, p. 115]; cf. G/J, III, p. 58 [II, p. 225]).

The last pages of Hegel's presentation of Plato are devoted to "aesthetics, the knowledge of the beautiful" (Michelet¹, II, pp. 130–131; Michelet², pp. 454–455 [II, pp. 115–116]). This is "another celebrated side of Platonic philosophy". "In respect to this", observes Hegel, "Plato has in like manner seized the one true thought, that the essence of the beautiful is intellectual, the Idea of reason". The works to which Hegel refers here are limited to *Hippias Major*.

1.1.4.5 Aristotle

The presentation of Aristotle's thought begins by with the regret at having to leave Plato: "Here we take leave of Plato, and we do so with regret" (Michelet¹, II, p. 132; Michelet², p. 455 [II, p. 117]; cf. G/J, III, p. 59 [II, p. 225]). Yet, this regret is mitigated by the observation that although Speusippus was appointed to direct the Academy, "however, Plato had Aristotle as his successor" (Michelet¹, II, p. 135; Michelet², p. 458 [II, p. 120]). Hegel thus anticipates the general meaning of his interpretation linking these two thinkers to each other in a single speculative link, in the climax achieved by Greek philosophy over the course of its historical development. Despite the differences he will have to emphasise, Hegel points out without delay the "injustice" committed towards Aristotle by those interpreters who contrasted him with Plato, regarding him as the supporter of a realism formulated against his master's idealism, a realism understood, indeed, "in the most trivial sense", an empiricism equivalent to "Locke's philosophy at its worst". In reality, "Aristotle excels Plato in speculative depth, for he was acquainted with the deepest kind of speculation – idealism" (Michelet¹, II, p. 133; Michelet², p. 457 [II, pp. 118–19]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 59–60 [II, pp. 225–226]). It seems to us that the Aristotelian idealism Hegel speaks of should be taken in a very restricted sense, that is to say in a Hegelian sense, at least as regards some decisive points of Aristotle's thought (the conception of God in the field of theology and the conception of the intellect in the field of psychology); and here Hegel performs a real *Umdeutung*, an actual overturning of the interpretation (cf. Düsing, pp. 123 and 125).

After these initial reflections, Hegel as usual provides information concerning the philosopher's life and works, a section he expands here with lengthy observations on the relationship between Aristotle and his royal pupil Alexander, who was launching into the conquest of the East (Michelet¹, II, pp. 135–141; Michelet², pp. 458–463 [II, pp. 119–126; G/J, III, pp. 60–63 [II, pp. 226–229]]). Then he offers a concise history of the different meanings which have been attributed to the expression "Aristotelian philosophy", which may include the following: primarily "Aristotelian philosophy proper"; but also, in the age of Cicero, "popular

philosophy”; for the Alexandrian Neoplatonists it meant Neoaristotelianism; then it meant medieval Scholastic philosophy; then the Aristotelianism of the Renaissance and Reformation; and finally the strange interpretations provided by the moderns, such as that of Tennemann, who “is endowed with too little philosophical sense to be able to comprehend Aristotelian philosophy. His translation has the Greek text beneath it and wholly contradicts it – often twisting it into the opposite” (Michelet¹, pp. 144–145; Michelet², p. 466 [II, pp. 129–131]; G/J, III, pp. 64–65 [II, pp. 231–232]).

The introductory part also includes some incisive general considerations on the Aristotelian way of philosophizing, which Hegel formulates in relation to what he had affirmed on the speculative value of this thought. The “manner” (*Manier*) of this Aristotelian “idealism” manifests characteristics opposed to mere empirical research: it does not present itself as a system of the sciences but as a separate and analytical evaluation of the various fields of knowledge, as an empirical description of phenomena conducted with sharpness; and it shows particular attention to the different thoughts expressed by common language and by the language of philosophers concerning the problem under discussion, as well as their confutation or rectification, in order to come finally to a true speculative conclusion. “In this gathering up of determinations into one notion, Aristotle is great and masterly, as he also is in regard to the simplicity of his method of progression, and in the giving of his decisions in few words” (Michelet¹, II, p. 148; Michelet², p. 468 [II, p. 133]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 65–66 [II, p. 233]). What characterises the Aristotelian manner therefore is a connection between the empirical analysis of problems – including a historical presentation of the opinions formulated by his predecessors – and a speculative, clarifying, and scrupulous understanding of them.

This section serving as an introduction concludes with some reflections on the idea of philosophy taken from the first book of the *Metaphysics*. Philosophy is that knowledge which has the first causes as its object; it is essential learning and it is characterised by the knowledge of the final aims, which can all be related to the supreme aim of the good (as Plato and Socrates had maintained, observes Hegel). Such philosophical knowledge arose from “wonder” and started when man freed himself from the needs of life, hence this knowledge is an end in itself, not connected to obtaining certain advantages (Michelet¹, II, pp. 149–150; Michelet², p. 469 [II, pp. 134–135]; G/J, III, pp. 66–67 [II, pp. 233–234]).

At this point, Hegel declares that it is impossible for him to present Aristotle in detail and announces the structure of the selected subjects: metaphysics, in particular ontology (*Metaph.* IV, VII, VIII, IX) and theology (*Metaph.* XII); the basic concept of nature and consequently a presentation of the works regarding physics, especially the *Physics* – but not *De anima*, which belongs to the moment of the “spirit”; thirdly, the spirit and, accordingly, a lengthy exposition of *De anima* and a shorter treatment of ethics and politics (Michelet¹, II, pp. 151–168, 168–198, 199–201, and 221–229; Michelet², pp. 470–482, 482–501, 502–516, and 516–521 [II, pp. 137–153, 153–179, 180–202, and 202–210]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 68–73, 73–78, 79–90, and 91–95 [II, pp. 234–239, 239–244, 244–254, and 255–258]). Finally his “logical concept”, namely the *Organon* and traditional logic, with a conclusion on

the whole first period of the history of Greek philosophy, which came to its end with Aristotle (Michelet¹, II, pp. 229–242 and 246–249; Michelet², pp. 522–535 and 535–537 [II, pp. 210–228 and 228–231]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 95–99 [II, pp. 258–261 and 261–262]).

Starting from the definition of metaphysics as the doctrine of being as being, Hegel illustrates the Aristotelian theory of substance (*ousia*): the four causes, the composition of matter and form, potency (*dynamis*) as possibility and actuality as reality (*energeia* or *Wirklichkeit*), or rather as *entelecheia*, namely, that which is in itself an end as well as the fulfilment of this end. In his exposition, Hegel greatly emphasises the finalistic character in the structure of reality, granting it – the real in act, as opposed to being as potency – with being as activity of the *energeia-entelecheia* (Michelet¹, II, pp. 152–156; Michelet², pp. 470–474 [II, pp. 137–141]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 69–70 [II, pp. 235–236]).

“The expression *dynamis* is with Aristotle ‘capacity’, the ‘implicit’, the ‘objective’; also the abstract universal in general, the Idea, the matter, which can take on all forms, without being itself the form-giving principle”, and it is only *potentia*. On the contrary, “*energeia* is activity (*Tätigkeit*), the actualizing form, the self-relating negativity” (Michelet¹, II, p. 154; Michelet², p. 472 [II, p. 138]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 69–70 [II, p. 236]). Note the special emphasis laid on the opposition between possible and active (understood not as that which is real, but rather as an actualizing activity). The identification of act with “activity”, with “*tätige Wirksamkeit*” is constantly reiterated in these pages, always with a focus on the activist aspect of the act, while what is omitted is the moment in which the actualization of the activity is achieved, which the act nevertheless represents. It seems to me that for Aristotle an act is not only an activity *in fieri*, but also the fulfilment of this activity. Moreover, Hegel explicitly renders Aristotle’s language in his own language: that which is expressly characterized as *energeia*, he explains, is precisely this negativity (*Negativität*), active efficacy [*tätige Wirksamkeit*], is dualizing this being-for-self, removing (*aufheben*) unity and bringing forward duality – it is no longer being-for-self but being-for-other, hence negativity as opposed to unity. And yet, it seems to me that the Aristotelian reality of the act cannot easily be translated into dialectic terms as Hegel does.

Of great importance for Hegel is another point discussed in Aristotle’s metaphysics, namely the concept of divine substance, which he equally presents through his strained idealistic interpretation and almost always following closely the twelfth book of the *Metaphysics* (Michelet¹, II, pp. 156–162; Michelet², pp. 474–475 [II, pp. 141–142]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 71–73 [II, pp. 237–239]). On this point, see the extended and well-documented interpretation offered by Ferrarin (with whom I occasionally disagree), with abundant references to critical literature.⁹ The starting point is the distinction between the three modes (*Weisen*) of substance (*Metaph.* XII, I). The first is the “sensuous perceptible substance”, that is, finite substance, composed of matter and form and subject to movement, in which all these

⁹A. Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 117–128.

determinations (matter, form, movement) appear to be extrinsic to one another. The second mode of substance, “a higher kind of substance”, is understanding (*nous*, *Verstand*). Here the reader might expect to find the substance of the celestial bodies, which is itself sensible and movable but incorruptible and eternal, as appears from the classification set out in the *Metaphysics* (XII, I, 1069a 30), whose function is to be intermediate between the world of the terrestrial substances and the supreme substance of the unmoved Mover. To the contrary, Hegel offers a doctrine of the intellect and of the soul (perhaps on a human level) in which matter and “formal activity” (*Tätigkeit*) have become intrinsic to one another and united in form (since, according to him, form is the unity of both), but also in which the intellect in its active aspect still needs material potentiality, with which it is not yet identical. The materials used to formulate these statements on the intellect, which is presented here as the second mode of substance, are not derived from *Metaphysics* XII, which Hegel discusses here, but from other passages in the work (VII, 7; IX, 2; V, 1–2) and from *De anima* (II, 4–5). This results in a distortion and alteration of the general framework in which Aristotle presents the three kinds of substance, thus strongly affecting the interpretation of the third substance, the unmoved Mover, which Hegel also considers as the central theme to be discussed. Finally, we have the third and “highest” mode of substance, that in which potentiality (*dynamis*, *Möglichkeit*), activity (*energeia*, *Tätigkeit*), and actuality (*entelecheia*, *Entelechie*) “are united”, that is to say “absolute substance”. By that Hegel – who now comes back to *Metaph.* XII, 6 – means “the unmoved, which yet at the same time moves”. But this initial presentation is already compromised by the (albeit unified) presence of *dynamis*, and the resulting dialectic unification was to be expected, given that Hegel has distorted the criterion adopted for classifying the three substances by interpreting it as a progressive overcoming of the duality potency-actuality, *matter-entelecheia*. In the pure act, which, according to Hegel, the Scholastics rightly regarded as a definition of God, “God is pure activity”, “God is what is in and for itself” and does not need any material element (of course, always in the sense of a dialectic overcoming of the material element). “An higher idealism than this there is none” – observes Hegel satisfied. But what remains unchanged is the difficulty of reconciling this supreme idealism with the – Aristotelian – meaning of expressions like “pure act”, “thought thinking itself”, and so on.

According to Hegel, however, the third kind of substance, absolute substance, has the attribute of being pure act (owing to the primacy of act over potency), hence substance without matter, the unmoved which moves, such as to move like an object of desire and of thought, namely, like an end, and such as to be thought of thought, a determination on which Hegel dwells at length (Michelet¹, II, pp. 158–166; Michelet², pp. 475–481 [II, pp. 143–152]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 73–74 [II, 238–239]).

Hegel’s presentation of these central themes is rather questionable, in part due to the uncertainties of the text from Aristotle he uses (the Erasmus’ edition of 1531),¹⁰ in part due to the condition of the text of Hegel’s *Lectures*, and finally because of the

¹⁰ Cf. Düsing, pp. 127–128, note 141; Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, p. 120, note 16.

intentional idealistic and dialectic approach, which Hegel particularly emphasises in this case. We cannot enter into detail here, but will merely focus upon two points relating to *Metaph.* XII, 7.

The first point concerns the clear distinction which should be drawn between the first heavens and the unmoved Mover. In Hegel's text, the circular movement of the first heavens becomes the movement of "that which moves in itself": "That which moves in itself, and therefore, as Aristotle continues, 'that which has circular movement' (*Kreise*), is to be posited as the true Being, 'and this is evident not merely from thinking reason, but also from the fact itself'. From the definition of absolute Being as imparting motion, as bringing about realization, there follows that it exists in objectivity in visible nature. As the self-identical which is visible, this absolute Being is 'the eternal heavens'. The two modes of representing the Absolute are thus thinking reason and the eternal heavens. The heavens are moved, but they also cause movement. Since the spherical is thus both mover and moved, there is a centre-point which causes movement but remains unmoved, and which is itself at the same time eternal and a substance and energy (*energeia*). This great definition given by Aristotle of absolute Being as the circle of reason which returns into itself, is of the same tenor as modern definitions; the unmoved which causes movement is the Idea which remains self-identical, which, while it moves, remains in relation to itself" (Michelet¹, II, pp. 160–161; Michelet², pp. 476–477 [II, pp. 145–146]; cf. *Metaph.* XII, 7, 1072a 20–25). Despite the obscurity of Hegel's text, it seems to me that his interpretation quibbles over some Aristotelian ambiguities, since he considers the first heavens (the moved mover) and the unmoved mover as dialectic moments ("two modes of representing the Absolute": "*zwei Weisen der Darstellung des Absoluten*"), and accentuates the fact that the absolute manifests itself sensibly and *realiter* owing to the aspect or mode of the first heavens. There seems to emerge a situation characterised by a dialectic unity between unmoved mover and moved mover, a unity in which the first heavens and the unmoved mover are distinct only as moments of an identical absolute reality. The elements which allow such a bold interpretation are, besides a wrong reading of Erasmus' edition, some expressions tendentiously suggested and emphasised: the 'metaphorical character' of the eternal heavens (which, in my view, is present in Hegel, while Aristotle speaks simply of the first heavens of nature and not metaphorical heavens), its circular movement (another captivating Hegelian expression), whose exact counterpart is "the circle of reason which returns into itself" ("*der Kreis der in sich zurückkehrenden Vernunft*"), and so on (Michelet¹, II, p. 161; Michelet², p. 477 [II, p. 146]).

The second point I wish to consider is the 'idealistic' interpretation of the expression "the thinking of thinking" (*Denken des Denkens*) cited by Hegel a few lines above: "thought thinks itself by participation (*metálepsis*, *Annahme*) in that which is thought, [...] so that thought and the object of thought are the same" (Michelet¹, II, pp. 162–163; Michelet², p. 478 [II, pp. 147–148]; cf. *Metaph.* XII, 7, 1072b 20–25). After translating and quoting this text word for word, Hegel cannot keep himself from 'retranslating it', that is to say, re-formulating its conceptual meaning with his own words. He starts: *Der Begriff sagt* (the concept affirms): "We in our way of speaking designate the Absolute, the True, as the unity of subjectivity and

objectivity, which is therefore neither the one nor the other, and yet just as much the one as the other; and Aristotle busied himself with these same speculations, the deepest forms of speculation even of the present day, and he has expressed them with the greatest definiteness. With Aristotle it is thus no dry identity of the abstract understanding that is indicated, for he distinguishes subjective and objective precisely and decisively. Not dead identity such as this, but energy (*energeia-Energie*) is for him what is most to be revered, God. Unity is thus a poor, unphilosophical expression, and true Philosophy is not the system of identity; its principle is a unity which is activity, movement, repulsion, and thus, in being different, it is at the same time identical with itself" (Michelet¹, II, pp. 163–164; Michelet², p. 479 [II, pp. 148–149]). This idealistic explanation of Aristotle's theological thought, therefore, also concerns the polemic with Schelling. We can see the constant metaphorical and rhetorical use of terms: would anyone accept an identity presented as "dry" and "dead"? Hence, according to Hegel, Aristotle – whom he constantly translates 'from the perspective of the concept' – expresses, in the thinking of thinking, the primacy of the activity into which the object of what is thought resolves itself, thus interpreting dynamically the immobility that meditates upon itself, which, on the contrary, seems to be particularly clear – whether we like it or not – in Aristotle's unmoved mover, and peculiar to it. The same method and the same results are applied to the subsequent interpretation of the thinking of thinking (*noesis noeseos*, *Gedanke des Gedankens*) (Michelet¹, II, pp. 165–166; Michelet², pp. 480–481 [II, 150–152]; cf. *Metaph.* XII, 9, 1074b 30–35).

Metaphysics therefore comes to a conclusion by privileging a theology interpreted and renovated in dialectic terms – that is, those proper to the interpreter himself – and pantheistically oriented. As a result, on the one hand, Hegel is less interested in the traditional polemic between Aristotle and Plato, and, on the other, his consideration of the heavens loses its independence from metaphysics, since in this perspective the heavens constitute the dialectic moment antithetical (moved mover) to the unmoved mover.

This becomes evident when we move on to the "philosophy of nature", in which the cosmological content of the *De caelo* almost disappears from Hegel's discussion; there is also no presentation of Aristotle's system of the world, whose historical importance is considerable and undeniable.

The philosophy of nature of Hegel's Aristotle includes a lengthy examination of the *Physics* and a much shorter synopsis of the *De caelo* and the *De generatione* (Michelet¹, II, pp. 172–192, 193–195, and 196–198; Michelet², pp. 484–498 [II, pp. 153–179]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 74–78 [II, pp. 239–244]). The following themes of the *Physics* are examined: the general concept of nature, mechanical causes and final causes, cause and chance, nature and art; the concept of movement (with a short reference only to the problem of infiniteness), the concept of place, the questions of vacuum and time; and the movement of alteration. His presentation focuses in particular on book two and on the theme of causality, and here Hegel expresses words of praise for the use of final causality in physics. The remaining themes in the works of physics as a whole are only mentioned, with the intention of showing the systematic character and completeness of Aristotelian thought (from meteorology to

natural history, physiology, and animal anatomy). As we have said, little space is given to Aristotle's cosmological system, and the treatment of the soul is 'misplaced' (at least from a historical point of view), since it is viewed as belonging to 'spirit' rather than to 'nature'.

The philosophy of nature is followed by the "philosophy of spirit", which starts immediately with "psychology", within which Hegel discusses at length the *De anima* (Michelet¹, II, pp. 199–221; Michelet², pp. 502–516 [II, pp. 180–202]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 79–91 [II, pp. 245–255]). Due to this position, psychology loses the naturalistic flavour Aristotle had imparted to it, as a result of its being extended to the universality of the phenomenon of life, and it ends up with a prevalently anthropological and spiritualistic physiognomy. The four most distinctive points in Hegel's interpretation are contained in the pages devoted to the definition of the soul, the tripartition of the functions of the soul which break its unity, the activistic theory of sensation, and the doctrine of the intellect expounded in the well-known chapters 4 and 5 of book III (Michelet¹, II, pp. 200–202, 202–204, 205–212, and 212–219; Michelet², pp. 503–504, 504–505, 506–510, and 510–516 [II, pp. 181–184, 184–186, 186–194, and 194–202]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 80–81, 81–83, 83–87, and 87–91 [II, pp. 245–246, 247–248, 248–251, and 251–254]). In accordance with the activistic interpretation of ontology, when Hegel defines the soul, he accentuates its being *entelecheia* of the organic body and translates this term with "activity" (*Tätigkeit*), "agency" (*Wirksamkeit*), thus reducing the body to simple matter or possibility and concentrating the whole soul into the result of its active taking origin in the form. In agreement with the meaning of this definition of the soul, Hegel expresses his approval of the unity of the three souls held by Aristotle: there is no special common element outside them which can unify the three souls, just as the unity of geometrical figures does not take place in the general term 'figures', but concretely in the figure of the triangle, "the first, the truly universal figure, which appears also in the square etc." (Michelet¹, II, p. 203; Michelet², p. 505 [II, p. 185]; cf. G/J., III, p. 82 [II, 247]).

Again, in accordance with the activistic meaning of the reality of the soul, Hegel accords particular importance to Aristotle's analysis of sensation: it is no exclusive passive receptivity of corporeal sensory organs, but an activity that reacts in a psychological and spiritual sense, and both of them, receptivity and activity, are placed in a dialectic relation to each other. "Passivity and activity are one and the same thing" (Michelet¹, II, p. 205; Michelet², p. 506 [II, p. 187]; cf. G/J, III, p. 83 [II, p. 248]). Unity here is meant in a dialectic sense, preserving the distinction between elements, hence not according to Fichte's subjectivistic idealism, which removes the insuppressible receptivity of sense. According to Hegel, this is also the meaning of the famous images of the soul as a *tabula rasa* and of sensory receptivity as a seal ring that stamps an impression upon wax (Michelet¹, II, p. 208; Michelet², p. 508 [II, p. 189]; cf. G/J, III, p. 85 [II, pp. 249–250]).

But this activistic – or rather idealistic, as Hegel himself defines it, referring to his own dialectic idealism – interpretation of the soul is better expressed in relation to the act of thinking. In thought too there is passivity, an inert condition resulting from an intelligible which is not yet possessed (passive understanding); but it

becomes even more evident here that passivity does not mean matter. Understanding “is therefore not incorporated with the body”, it has no corporeal organ, it is nothing material (Michelet¹, II, p. 213; Michelet², p. 511 [II, p. 195]; cf. G/J, III, p. 87; [II, p. 251]). Passive only means in potency, corresponding to the moment of pure possibility. “That is to say, thought is implicitly the content of the object of what is thought (*noetà, das Seiende*), and in coming into existence it only coincides with itself; but the self-conscious understanding is not merely implicit, but essentially explicit, since it is within itself all things. That is an idealistic way of expressing it; and yet they say that Aristotle is an empiricist” (Michelet¹, II, p. 214; Michelet², pp. 511–512 [II, p. 195]). Hence, it is on the basis of this idealistic connotation that we should also understand the dictum *nihil est in intellectu etc.*, as well as the image of the passive understanding, which is like a book on which nothing is written, a *tabula rasa*; the meaning of all these examples is distorted by those interpreters who see Aristotle as an empiricist (Michelet¹, II, pp. 214–215; Michelet², p. 512 [II, pp. 196–197]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 88–89 [II, p. 252]).

As concerns the following well-known controversial chap. 5 on the active understanding (*De anima*, III, 5, 430a 10–26), in the *Lectures* Hegel quotes it in his own verbatim German translation, interspersing it with some expressions in Greek but without any explanations; Hegel limits himself to mentioning Tennemann (*Geschichte*, III, pp. 53–54 and 197–199; cf. *Models*, III, pp. 881–882) and observes: “So that thinking thus comes to it [i.e. to the mind] from without” (Michelet¹, II, p. 216; cf. Michelet², pp. 512–513 [II, 197–198]).¹¹ The translation itself clarifies Hegel’s interpretation of the question of the ‘two’ understandings presented in chap. 5, even though he makes no attempt to illustrate this centuries-old debate. Aristotle ‘distinguishes’ between active (*tätig*) understanding and passive (*passiv*) understanding: passive understanding “is the nature of the soul, but also in equal degree its faculty of sense-perception and imagination”. These are not different things strictly speaking but constitute differences and distinctions which exist within the soul and can be related to the general distinction existing in nature between matter or possibility and cause (*Ursache*), the active (*das Tätige*). Hegel also translates the terms of the Aristotelian distinction into his own terms: the passive is *nous an sich*, the active is *nous an und für sich*. In fact, *an und für sich* is also the translation of the subsequent *choristós*, being separate, that is, a property of the active understanding, in addition to that of being unmixed. And, referring again to the “active” (*tätig*; added to the original Greek): when *nous* (active) is in itself and for itself (*choristheis*), “when it is absolute, it is the one and only existence; and this alone is eternal and immortal” (Michelet¹, II, p. 216; Michelet², p. 513 [II, p. 198]). According to Hegel’s interpretation, the Aristotelian distinctions must be understood dialectically; this explains the importance of the – merely dialectic and dynamic – distinction between active and passive, in accordance with

¹¹ On the translation of *De anima*, see: W. Kern, ‘Übersetzung Hegels zu *De anima*, III, 4–5, mitgeteilt und erläutert’, *Hegel-Studien*, I (1961), pp. 49–88; cf. Düsing, pp. 105, note 114, and 123, note 133.

the whole direction given to the Aristotelian, activist, and idealistic – non-empiricist – psychology.

The *De anima* represents the theoretical aspect of the spirit, whereas, according to Hegel, the ethical and political works correspond to its practical aspect. Although he had studied practical philosophy in depth from the very beginning of his period in Jena, it is rarely present in these *Lectures*. Only few pages are devoted to ethics, and just as few are reserved for politics (Michelet¹, II, pp. 221–225 and 225–229; Michelet², pp. 515–519 and 519–521 [II, pp. 202–206 and 207–210]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 93–95 [II, pp. 256–258]). Two ethical subjects discussed: happiness and the virtues. Even less original is his presentation of Aristotelian political thought, though the conclusion is perhaps significant: unlike Plato, Aristotle did not provide a detailed description of the state or the best political structure; he did not need to argue at length to affirm that “the best would suffer injustice if rated on an equality with the others inferior to them in virtue and political abilities”; and that “a notable man is like a god amongst men”. And, presumes Hegel, “here Alexander is no doubt in Aristotle’s mind”. Indeed, “the Greek Democracy had then entirely fallen into decay, so Aristotle could no longer ascribe to it any merit” (Michelet¹, II, pp. 228–229; Michelet², p. 521 [II, p. 210]; cf. G/J, III, p. 95 [II, p. 258]).

Towards the end of this chapter on Aristotle there is a fairly long account of the *Organon*. This, however, is kept distinct from the rest of the treatment and, in a way, was only included because of the way it was constantly used as a school text book. The cordial scorn with which Hegel typically considers Aristotle’s formal logic is immediately evident. In his eyes, it represents thought “in its finite application”; Aristotle is like a naturalist (*Naturbeschreiber*), “his logic is thus a natural history of finite thought” (Michelet¹, II, p. 229; Michelet², p. 523 [II, p. 211]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 96–97 [II, pp. 260–261]), and so on. In the same way the account ends with a lengthy anti-naturalistic polemic (Michelet¹, II, pp. 237–241; Michelet², pp. 528–532 [II, pp. 219–223]). There is a longer presentation of Aristotle’s *Categories*, while the other texts of the *Organon* are presented very briefly (Michelet¹, II, pp. 230–235 and 235–237; Michelet², pp. 523–527 and 527–528 [II, pp. 212–217 and 217–219]), with greater interest in the *Topics* but very little in the *Analytics*, which Hegel explains away in a few lines.

The long chapter on Aristotelian thought ends with some brief remarks on the subsequent history of Aristotelianism. For many centuries Aristotle was the advocate of the importance of educating (*Bildung*) the mind to think: he performed this function among the Arabs when the sciences disappeared from the Christian West, and then again among the Western Latins when the sciences were brought back by the Arabs and revived. The triumphal victory (in the Renaissance) over Aristotelian philosophy, which consisted in banishing it from schools, from the sciences, and from theology, reveals in fact two aspects. First of all, what was banished was not the Aristotelian philosophy but the theological principle which had prevailed in it (that is, that prime truth is made known through revelation); secondly, this alleged victory over Aristotelianism was in reality a victory of the ordinary mentality, which believed it was possible to become free from the concept and throw off the yoke of thought (Michelet¹, II, p. 243; Michelet², pp. 534–535 [II, pp. 226–227]). And here

Hegel contrasts the conceptual subtleties of Aristotelianism with corresponding useless subtleties in the empirical scientific research carried out by the moderns.

Hegel shows an evident sympathy for Aristotle's thought, but he does not conceal its inadequacy (*Mangel*), which he summarises by criticising its lack of systematic structure. Although the Aristotelian demonstrative process is rightly directed toward inferring the universal of a concept from particular instances, this ends up by being split into a series of determinate concepts, thus losing unity, the absolute concept that unifies them (Michelet¹, II, p. 244). As we saw from the beginning, on the other hand, a positive quality of Aristotelian philosophy was precisely its peculiar 'fashion' of proceeding through the analytical and unconnected consideration of knowledge in the various fields: but this increase in concreteness is eventually paid for with a lack of systematic unity.

1.1.4.6 Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics

With his presentation of Aristotle's philosophy, Hegel concludes the first period of Greek philosophy and opens up the second phase, which we will call post-Aristotelian Hellenistic philosophy, but which Hegel defines as the thought of "Dogmatism and Scepticism" (Michelet¹, II, pp. 246–249; Michelet², pp. 535–537 [II, pp. 228–231]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 99–101 [II, pp. 263–264]). Thanks to Plato and Aristotle, philosophy followed a process of maturation in which it established itself as a science, but it still lacked a systematic character, "the form of a system", in which thoughts are arranged as consequences drawn from a principle. A first attempt to develop a system was made by "dogmatism", which appears to be split into two because of the opposition between Stoic and Epicurean philosophy. These were both dogmatic systems because they derived from abstract understanding ("*ein Philosophieren des Verstandes*"). This intellect emphasized the subjectivity of self-consciousness (this was a new principle, well exemplified in the two, equivalent, figures of the Stoic wise man and the Epicurean wise man) and constituted itself as a philosophy of reflection. There are essentially two problems to dogmatism: the criterion of truth (logic) and the quality of wisdom (morals). Hegel also dwells on a third problem, however: physics, which is related to the conception of the divine and the soul, although he does not judge the physics of this period to be very important. The dogmatic oppositions between the Stoics and the Epicureans are unilateral, and the third philosophy of this age, scepticism, opposed them without difficulty. The sceptics (at first as neo-academics and then as sceptics strictly speaking) represent the figure and function of negation (Michelet¹, II, pp. 249–255; Michelet², pp. 538–541 [II, pp. 232–236]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 99–101 [II, pp. 263–264]). Sceptic negation had a definite dialectic function: to dismantle the unilateralism of the opposing dogmatic statements of abstract understanding, without however providing a positive solution to resolve the contradiction. "But this result [scepticism] as merely negative is itself again a one-sided determinateness opposed to the positive; scepticism, that is, only holds its place as abstract understanding; it makes the mistake of thinking that this negation is likewise a determinate affirmative content

in itself; for it is, as the negation of negation, the self-relating negativity or infinite affirmation” (Michelet¹, II, p. 360; Michelet², p. 604 [II, pp. 330–331]; cf. G/J, III, p. 144 [II, p. 302]).

Hegel therefore gives Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Scepticism a historical function, which – for the relationship between Stoicism and Scepticism at least – repeats a similar situation already described in the *Phenomenology* (ed. J. Hoffmeister, pp. 152–154): Stoicism as a figure of self-consciousness leads to freedom from the relation *Mastery-Servitude* (*Herrschaft-Knechtschaft*), although, in this case too, it implies the inadequacies of self-consciousness itself, which is destined to fail, and ends in Scepticism.

We cannot describe Hegel’s account of Stoic thought in detail here, nor that of Epicurean thought, or the neo-academic thought of Arcesilaus and Carneades, which leads into sceptic thought (Michelet¹, II, pp. 256–296, 297–336, 336–358, and 358–403; Michelet², pp. 542–569, 569–591, 591–602, and 602–632 [II, pp. 236–276, 276–311, 311–328, and 328–373]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 103–118, 118–134, 134–143, and 143–159 [II, 265–279, 279–293, 294–302, and 302–316]). We can only limit ourselves to observing how Hegel follows the vicissitudes of ancient Scepticism with intense sympathy, drawing a clear distinction between ancient Scepticism and the Scepticism of the *Aenesidemus* by his contemporary G.E. Schulze, whom he describes in words of scorn (Michelet¹, II, pp. 360–362; Michelet², pp. 604–605 and 629 [II, pp. 331–332 and 368]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 151–152 [II, p. 309]). His sources are principally Sextus Empiricus and Diogenes Laertius. From Sextus he quotes extensively the thought of the ten ancient tropes, dwelling in particular on the five more modern tropes (Michelet¹, II, pp. 376–393; Michelet², pp. 614–625 [II, pp. 347–364]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 151–157 [II, pp. 309–314]) which are the most significant, and he comes to the conclusion that, thanks to its negative power, Scepticism is very effective for combatting the dogmatic philosophies. But Scepticism also expresses the positive moment of the speculative idea: just as it is effective in countering the intellectualistic consciousness of that which is dogmatic, so it is powerless with respect to that which is speculative (Michelet¹, II, pp. 396–397; Michelet², pp. 628–629 [II, pp. 367–369]; cf. G/J, III, p. 158 [II, p. 315]).

1.1.4.7 Neoplatonism

The third section of Greek philosophy – Neoplatonism – brings the whole course of ancient thought to a close. Hegel believes it is important to determine the place of Neoplatonism in the history of the Idea, both from a temporal and a logical point of view. His presentation is therefore preceded by lengthy introductions intended to clarify the situation (Michelet¹, II, pp. 403–418; Michelet², pp. 633–644 [II, 374–387]; cf. G/J, III, 159–168 [II, pp. 317–323]). As we know, the lack of consideration of Neoplatonic thought by Enlightenment thinkers contrasts with its rehabilitation by Hegel, which represented the first serious attempt to address the question, even though Tiedemann and Buhle had already found positive elements in Plotinus and grounds for differentiating him from Plato (cf. *Models*, III, pp. 665–666

and 812). In Hegel's eyes, what favours the Neoplatonists is their position on a logical and historical plane. After philosophy had evolved as a science – thanks to Plato and Aristotle – and after the discovery of self-consciousness by the Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics, although only as regards individual subjectivity, Neoplatonism appears to be the third moment in which self-consciousness becomes anchored to a universal and objective content. The idea that absolute essence (*das absolute Wesen*) is not extraneous to self-consciousness, that being is nothing unless it finds its immediate self-consciousness: this principle is explicitly affirmed as the universal spirit of the world, as the “belief and knowledge of all men” (Michelet¹, II, pp. 404–405; Michelet², p. 634 [II, p. 375]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 159–160 [II, p. 317]). Scepticism has cancelled all opposition; all the criteria adopted by the (Stoic-Epicurean) finite subjective knowledge have been abandoned; Neoplatonism however retrieves the theme of self-consciousness, which thus becomes an objective theme. Indeed, with Neoplatonism, closely linked to the revolution brought about by the Christian religion, “an entirely new epoch begins” (Michelet¹, II, p. 404; Michelet², p. 634 [II, p. 374]).

Hegel emphasizes this connection with Christianity, which develops at the same time as the Neoplatonists, and he thus shows that the new epoch, the Christian-Germanic world, starts simultaneously (or coincidently) with the last phase of ancient thought. The age of Neoplatonism witnessed the development of two cultural attitudes on which Hegel places special emphasis: Roman private law and the Christian religion. Private law represents the recognition of human dignity in each person, or in other words, the value of the individual. However, since the Roman civilisation was the expression of a universalistic State, this resulted in a contradictory situation, in which society was made up of individual atoms linked together only extrinsically, and the link was embodied by a single person, the Emperor: “perfect despotism” (Michelet¹, II, p. 405; Michelet², p. 634 [II, pp. 375–376]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 159–161 [II, p. 317]).

Then there is the question of religion. A breach (*Bruch*) was formed inside the spirit between its subjectivity and absolute objectivity. The delight of the spiritual life (the Greek world) was replaced by the sorrow provoked by this breach (Michelet¹, II, p. 406; Michelet², p. 634 [II, p. 376]; cf. G/J, III, p. 161 [II, pp. 317–318]). New and meaningful forms of behaviour became widespread: withdrawal from the world; new cults and new religions based on mysteries penetrated into Rome; nature and the need for it were disdained; faith in miracles and distrust of the present nature arose. “But the real liberation of the spirit appeared in Christianity”. The pantheon of religions were fused into a single religion that consisted in affirming “that self-consciousness – an actual human being – is absolute essence [...]. Now it is revealed to man what absolute essence is; it is ‘a man’, but not yet Man or self-consciousness in general”. This represents the novelty, but also the limitation, of Christianity: self-consciousness objectively identified, but in one man, Christ; the need to grasp “through the concept” that which Christianity only possessed “in the bare form of representation” (Michelet¹, II, pp. 406–409; Michelet², pp. 635–637 [II, pp. 377–380]).

The negative aspect of the Christian religion, therefore, consists in the representative, or mythical, character of its principles. Hegel looks for their possible conceptualisation, and finds examples in the circles of Alexandria, among some Hebrew Platonists. Indeed, their conception of the creation was expressed philosophically: this was no accidental decision, no arbitrary decree of God, but it was God's necessary movement, in which his being is expressed as his eternal necessity. Some other precedents of these conceptualisations can be found in the Pythagoreans, in Plato himself, in Aristotle (in the concept of *energeia*), and in the "pantheism" of the Stoics, for which, however, Hegel shows little sympathy. Given these premises, what is now required "is that the knowing mind, which thus out of objectivity returns into itself and its inwardness, should reconcile with itself the world which it has left". This is the idea of the return into itself, of being in itself and for itself (*Anundfürsichsein*), which in the Christian religion is expressed in the Trinity; this was already being prepared by Plato and Aristotle, and so there was no need to take the tortuous path through post-Aristotelian dogmatic thought (Michelet¹, II, pp. 409–413; Michelet², pp. 637–641 [II, pp. 380–384]).

In conclusion, the four points highlighted by Hegel as a preliminary guide to a new way of understanding Neoplatonism are: self-consciousness, which now receives its object in God; the new world of oppositions produced by God; a new dialectic manner of conceiving God, as placed in a necessary relation with man and the world; and the overcoming of naturalistic pantheism in a more rewarding unity with God, which takes place within the sphere of the intelligible (Michelet¹, II, pp. 414–418; Michelet², pp. 642–644 [II, pp. 384–387]).

The account of Neoplatonism is structured in two long chapters: Plotinus and Proclus, preceded by short historical notes on Philo, the Cabbala and gnosticism, Alexandrian philosophy in general, and Ammonius Saccas (Michelet¹, II, pp. 418–486; Michelet², pp. 644–690 [II, pp. 387–450]; cf. G/J, III, pp. 159–191 [II, pp. 317–346]). The chapter on Plotinus begins with some concise information on his life and writings taken from the biography by Porphyry; it then briefly announces some general considerations concerning Plotinus' way of philosophising. Plotinus' writings are answers to questions posed by his audience; they are not arranged according to a systematic list of themes; he always starts with a particular subject and relates it to universal principles; he agrees with Plato, but also with some essential Aristotelian principles – hence his thought can also be defined as a form of neo-Aristotelianism – and it also takes up the Stoic theme of the *logos* (Michelet¹, pp. 437–440; Michelet², pp. 660–662 [II, pp. 405–408]). Hegel then gets to the heart of the subject and discusses the themes addressed by Plotinus, starting with that of ecstasy and moving on to the contents of ecstasy itself, which are presented in the following order: the One, Understanding, and the Soul and the world; then he deals with the principle of the material world, matter, and the theme of evil which is connected to it, concluding with brief notes on the doctrine of virtue and the polemic against the Gnostics and finally a page on Plotinus' intellectualism and idealism (Michelet¹, II, pp. 440–465; Michelet², pp. 662–677 [II, pp. 408–431]).

Hegel starts with ecstasy – which in his eyes consists in placing oneself at the central point, in pure intuition and pure thought – and claims that this intellectual

conquest of the absolute is a valid starting point, unlike those (Stoics and Epicureans) who thought it necessary to establish a criterion of knowledge beforehand. This is an implicit polemic against all philosophy of reflection, against the Kantian need for propaedeutics. On the other hand, against the Enlightenment tradition, Hegel believes it necessary to defend Plotinus' starting point from any accusation of *Schwärmerei*, or mystical enthusiasm. To this end he quotes passages in which Plotinus emphasises the moment of the soul's liberation from the body, its becoming simple as a thought purified from sense: "The soul which withdraws from the corporeal and loses every conception but that of pure essence brings itself nigh to the Deity. The principle of the philosophy of Plotinus is therefore the reason which is in and for itself [...]. This withdrawal of the soul from the body takes place through pure thought; thought is the activity and at the same time the object. It is thus a tranquil state, without any wild turmoil of the blood or of the imagination. Ecstasy is not a mere rapturous condition of the senses and fancy, but rather a passing beyond the content of sensuous consciousness; it is pure thought that is at home with itself, and is its own object" (Michelet¹, II, p. 443; Michelet², p. 665 [II, pp. 411–412]). Note that this does not indicate an empty self-consciousness, but rather the self-consciousness of the divine essence itself, full of its own object, which is absolute Being.

Placing oneself at the standpoint of the absolute means therefore coming straight to the point; nevertheless, what starts to develop from there, from that point, is different from any other philosophical content, it is the very core of reality. And the contents that are thought in the state of ecstasy, of pure thought, are the very moments of reality which, since they are thought, have reality only if they are dependent on the condition of pure thought. This is an 'idealistic' interpretation of the Plotinian system. The moments are the One, Understanding, the Soul, and the changeable world.

The One is "pure Being" (*das reine Sein*); it is not empty being but "absolute actuality in itself" (*die absolute Wirklichkeit an ihm selbst*); "absolute, pure Being" and "the absolute Good" is "that which all things desire", as Plato and Aristotle affirm, and "that on which all depends", as Aristotle affirms (Michelet¹, II, pp. 445–446; Michelet², pp. 666–667 [II, pp. 413–414]). To determine how the other things derive from the One is a problem for Plotinus. This passage, observes Hegel, is expressed by Plotinus neither philosophically nor dialectically, but through images. In this case, what predominates is the image of the "source" from which there flow waters branching out into the multiplicity of rivers. This attribution of pure Being to the One, with reference also to Parmenides and Zeno of Elea (Michelet¹, II, p. 445; Michelet², p. 666 [II, p. 413]), which is put forward by Hegel, might be questioned and needs to be clarified. In other words, it should be understood as an affirmation of the actuality of the One, which is not nothing but, on the contrary, is the fullness of the real, which is viewed as its only source. Once this is admitted, Hegel does not fail to emphasise Plotinus' preference for the negative way: "All such predicates as Being and substance do not conform to it in the opinion of Plotinus; for they express some determination or other" (Michelet¹, II, p. 446; Michelet², p. 667 [II, p. 414]).

From the One there derives Understanding, *nous*, which Hegel renders in German with *Verstand*: “the second Divine Being”, the other principle, “the Son” (Michelet¹, II, p. 448; Michelet², p. 668 [II, p. 416]). Hegel interweaves theological and Aristotelian language. Indeed, the second moment is precisely a unity in duality; as in Aristotle, this is thought that thinks itself. But Hegel can also formulate this in the terms of his own system, as a moment of division and return into itself: “God therefore through distinction and extension is likewise a return to Himself, that is, this very duality is simply in the unity, and is its object. What is thought is not outside *nous*, in thought *nous* merely possesses itself as thinking” (Michelet¹, II, p. 450; Michelet², p. 670 [II, pp. 418–419]).

The world, which is changeable and “subject to difference”, arises from the multiplicity of these forms in understanding, which are not only in it, but “also exist for it in the form of its object”. And this is “the eternal creation of the world”. Hegel emphasises this eternal root of the temporal, which for him constitutes the overcoming of the alterity and the foreign character of the world with respect to thought. “It is plain that in these thoughts of Plotinus the being-another, the foreign element, is abrogated, existing things are implicitly notions” (Michelet¹, II, pp. 452–453; Michelet², p. 671 [II, pp. 420–421]).

Very rapidly and with no particular originality Plotinus moves on to the soul – that of the world and individual souls – and then discusses the problems of matter and evil. Hegel strongly emphasises the Plotinian solution of the concept of matter as negativity, as a possibility devoid of *energeia*, which is related to the analogous solution – in the sense of the negative non-being – of the problem of evil; moreover, he underlines Plotinus’ anti-Manichaean position, dwelling on his polemic against the Gnostics (Michelet¹, II, pp. 453–463; Michelet², pp. 671–676 [II, pp. 421–429]).

In conclusion, we can sum up as follows: what we have presented so far is the fundamental idea of that which Hegel defines as the “intellectualism and idealism of Plotinus”; all other particular aspects are linked back to this idea, frequently not on a conceptual level but through images. Plotinus has overcome scepticism and dogmatism, “which establish the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity. Plotinus has rejected them, has soared upwards into the highest regions, into the Aristotelian thought of thought; he has much more in common with Aristotle than with Plato, and thereby he is not dialectic, nor does he proceed out of himself, nor as consciousness does he go back out of himself into himself again”. But his method of proceeding is not dialectic. Hegel stresses this point and cites as an example the “many-coloured pictures (*in bunten Bildern*)” used by Plotinus to describe the descent of the souls into the bodies (Michelet¹, II, pp. 463–465; Michelet², pp. 676–677 [II, pp. 429–431]). A dialectician was to emerge, however, to bring Neoplatonic thought to perfection. Hegel does not mention his name, but after a short page devoted to Porphyry and Iamblichus, we meet Proclus: in Hegel’s view, what characterizes Proclus is a deep study of Plato’s dialectic. And at the end of the chapter, he declares: “In Proclus we have the culminating point of Neo-Platonic philosophy” (Michelet¹, II, pp. 469 and 486; Michelet², pp. 681 and 690 [II, pp. 435 and 450]).

After giving an account of Proclus' life and describing his personality, characterised by religious initiations and theurgic practices relating to all cults, the first and practically the only aspect of his thought Hegel discusses is dialectic: dialectic in general and then, in particular, the One and the enades and the first triads, such as unlimited-limiting-mixed and being-life-understanding (Michelet¹, II, pp. 469–486; Michelet², pp. 681–690 [II, pp. 435–450]). Proclus' dialectic as a whole develops on the basis of his reflections on Plato's *Parmenides*, especially his *Commentary* on this great dialogue. The more general terms of dialectic, the concepts of unity, multiplicity, and being, are concepts of our thought as well as ontological expressions of the absolute being. "Proclus now shows, according to Platonic dialectic, how all determinations, and particularly that of multiplicity, are resolved into themselves and return into unity. What to the conceiving consciousness is one of its most important truths – that many substances exist, or that the many things, each of which is termed a one, and hence substance, exist in truth in themselves – is lost in this dialectic, and the result is that only unity is true existence, all other determinations are merely vanishing magnitudes, merely moments, and thus their being is only an immediate thought" (Michelet¹, II, pp. 469–470; Michelet², p. 682 [II, pp. 436–437]). Here Proclus' dialectic is not yet the same as that of Hegel.

In Hegel's eyes, Proclus' dialectic is structured into the following concepts: unity returning into itself; negation which is not only privative, but also affirmative; and Trinity. "The One is in itself inexpressible and unknowable, but it can be grasped in its producing and its returning into itself" (Michelet¹, II, pp. 470–471; Michelet², p. 683 [II, pp. 437–438]). The dialectic movement of being in itself, coming out of itself (*proodos*), and returning (*epistrophē*) produces the knowledge of the One. Regarding these negations, as they appear in *Parmenides*, Proclus now says that "they do not signify an abrogation of the content of which they are predicated, but are the creation of determinatives in accordance with their opposites. Thus if Plato shows that the first is not many, this has the significance that the many proceed from the first; if he shows that it is not a whole, it proves that the fact of being a whole proceeds from it" (Michelet¹, II, p. 471; Michelet², p. 683 [II, pp. 437–438]). This proceeding movement derives from an overabundance of power which originates things that are similar to the One and partake of it; this happens, for example, in the production of the enades.

The last fundamental element of Proclus' dialectic is Trinity; the dialectic process always consists of three moments. Here Proclus and his interpreter Hegel agree on the meanings related on the one hand to logic, and on the other to theology, that is, late paganism and Christian patristic formulations. Proclus' Trinity is a tri-unity (*Dreieinigkeit*), because the return of the third moment into the first results in the fact that unity is a totality, that it consists in the very Trinity of moments and these moments consist in the unity to which they are brought back. "Because each of these differences in the Idea, as remaining in unity with itself, is really again the whole of these moments, there are different orders in production; and the whole is the process of the three totalities establishing themselves in one another as identical" (Michelet¹, II, p. 474; cf. Michelet², p. 685 [II, p. 440]).

After these statements concerning the triadic dialectic structure proper to Proclus, Hegel starts to examine the triads present in the system. First of all he deals with the first passage, from the One, which is unknowable in itself, to the enades, which are the many ones of things: “This unity is the super-substantial, and in the second place its first production is the many ones of things, pure numbers”; in them the One is laid down as a multiplicity which always returns to the One (Michelet¹, II, pp. 476–477; Michelet², p. 685 [II, p. 441]). Then he examines at length the triad of the principles contained in *Philebus*: unlimited-limiting-what is mingled from both; and finally the triad being-life-understanding. This analysis concludes with the corresponding classes of gods and with the theurgic aspects of Proclus’ activity, which Hegel does not disdain but, on the contrary, considers to be an important animation of the mythical element through the divine itself.

1.1.4.8 The Philosophy of the Middle Ages

“One thousand years, [...] which we intend to get through by putting on seven-league boots (*Siebenmeilienstiefel*)”, namely, the thousand years covering the Middle Ages, from the closure of the philosophical schools of Athens (529 C.E.) to Luther’s Reformation, just as a thousand years passed between Thales and Proclus too (G/J, IV, p. 1 [III, p. 15]; cf. Michelet¹, II, p. 493; Michelet², p. 693 [III, p. 1]). There was a practical need – to condense a long period into few pages, dictated by the lack of space in the semester, three-quarters of which was already given over to the theoretical introduction and the presentation of Greek philosophy, while the audience impatiently looked forward to a presentation of modern thought; but perhaps the choice to deal succinctly with the medieval period was also the result of a value judgement: scholasticism is not really a philosophy. Referring to “the way (*Art und Weise*) in which the Scholastics worked”, their way of philosophizing, Hegel states that “their philosophizing or thinking was burdened with an absolute presupposition, namely, the teaching of the Church, which was, to be sure, itself speculative, implicitly what is true. But this teaching still was in the mode of representation. So their thinking does not appear as issuing freely from itself or as inwardly self-moving; instead it depends on a given content, one that is speculative but still contains within itself the mode of immediate existence. The consequence is that with this presupposition thinking will be essentially inferential. Inference is the mode of formal logical procedure: a finitely particular determination is presupposed, from which one proceeds to another. As particular, such determinations are altogether finite; they function externally; they do not return unto themselves in cyclical fashion; they do not reunite integrally” (G/J, IV, p. 30 [III, p. 40]; cf. Michelet¹, II, pp. 543–544; Michelet², p. 723 [III, pp. 42–43]). Elsewhere, Hegel unceremoniously maintains that because of this lack of freedom and its formalism, Scholastic philosophy “is not a philosophy” (Michelet², p. 719 [p. 38]). In addition, as Hegel himself openly admits, he has little direct knowledge of the works of the Scholastics (and the Church Fathers and the Arabs), since he has limited himself to taking his information from the great historical works of Brucker, Tiedemann, and Tennemann (see G/J, IV, *Anmerkungen*,

p. 201, 3, 86; p. 206, 17, 506–512; p. 213, 32, 980–984; 32, 986–1 etc.). Indeed, we must remember that for Hegel there are two important historical and theoretical periods of philosophy: ancient Greek thought and modern Christian-Germanic thought. The Middle Ages become an autonomous epoch only subsequently, in the course of the discussion (thus reproducing the triadic historiographical scheme previously adopted by Brucker, that is, a subdivision into ancient-medieval-modern philosophy), but always and only in a subordinate role to its ‘preparatory’ and ‘fermentative’ function. Let us not forget, however, that the presence in the Middle Ages of the Christian (or Christian-Germanic) element is a sign of incipient and at least potential modernity.

Hegel’s rapid journey through the Middle Ages is punctuated by various steps. After the first introductory pages (G/J, IV, pp. 1–10 [III, pp. 15–23]; cf. Michelet¹, II, pp. 493–501; Michelet², pp. 693–701 [III, pp. 1–11]), with no title, which are devoted to the “idea of Christianity” and are related to what Hegel had already partly explained regarding Neoplatonic thought in late Antiquity, the text progresses by numbering several titles: 1. the Church Fathers (G/J, IV, pp. 10–16 [III, pp. 23–29]); cf. Michelet¹, II, pp. 501–513; Michelet², pp. 701–710 [III, pp. 11–23]); 2. Arabic philosophy and the philosophy of the *Medabberim* (or ‘Speakers’) (G/J, IV, pp. 17–20 [III, pp. 29–32]; cf. Michelet¹, II, pp. 514–522; Michelet², pp. 712–717 [III, pp. 26–33]); 3. the Scholastics (G/J, IV, pp. 20–45 [III, pp. 32–45]; cf. Michelet¹, II, pp. 524–600; Michelet², pp. 719–769 [III, pp. 37–107]), a subject which, after an introduction with no title, is itself subdivided into fundamental moments from Scotus Eriugena to mysticism, between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; 4. the Renaissance and Reformation (G/J, IV, pp. 45–70 [III, pp. 55–81]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 11–58; Michelet², pp. 770–800 [III, pp. 108–155]).

As for the Church Fathers, who are presented as an undivided whole without citing any names, Hegel limits himself to mentioning the theoretical problems involved in their religious commitment: namely, the problem of scriptural exegesis in the light of the principle that “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (G/J, IV, p. 12 [III, p. 24]; cf. Michelet¹, II, p. 503; Michelet², pp. 701–702 [III, p. 12]), and that of the reconciliation between the divine and the human element as it is represented in the dogma of the divinity and humanity of Christ (hence the double front of patristic polemics, against the Docetism of the Gnostics and against the opposite heresy of Arianism).

Even shorter is Hegel’s treatment of Arabic philosophy (to which he adds some information on Judaic philosophy): he briefly mentions their work of translation and commentary on the Greek philosophers, whereas he dwells a little longer – quoting a long passage from the *Doctor perplexorum* of Moses Maimonides – on the “sect” of the “loquentes” (*Medabberim* in Hebrew, *Mutakalimun* in Arabic) and their “atomism” and “pantheism” (G/J, IV, p. 18 [III, pp. 30–31]; more extensive is the account included in Michelet¹, II, pp. 517–522; Michelet², pp. 715–717 [III, pp. 30–35]).

The theme of medieval Latin Scholasticism strictly speaking is discussed at greater length following a more elaborate structure. In the introductory pages (G/J, IV, pp. 20–31 [pp. 32–41]; cf. Michelet¹, II, pp. 524–550; Michelet², pp. 719–735

[III, pp. 37–58]), Hegel outlines the characteristics of Scholastic philosophy and its historical background: the way its thought was dependent on the institution of the Church; the interweaving of the decadent culture of the Romans with the roughness and natural violence of the Germans; the search for a reconciliation between the two components and the persistent conflict between the Empire and the Church due also to the function of the Emperor as an *advocatus ecclesiae*; the contrasts between the contemplative tendencies of the monks and the active life of chivalry which manifested itself in the violence of the Crusades; and finally the remaining unsettled contrasts, such as that between the pure idea of God and its expression – on an external and objectual plane – in the Mass and the further religious exteriority in the priesthood and in the administration of the means of divine Grace. Hegel succeeds in condensing all this into a theological expression: the centuries of Scholasticism represent “the lordship [Herrschaft] of the Son, not [yet] of the Spirit” (Michelet¹, II, p. 542; Michelet², p. 734 [III, p. 57]; cf. G/J, IV, p. 28 [III, p. 39]).

Hegel divides the principal moments of Scholastic philosophy into short presentations of Scholastic authors and the themes they discussed. The starting point is represented by Scotus Eriugena, who was followed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by Anselm of Aosta (Hegel appreciates the so-called ontological proof) and Abelard, to whom he devotes only a few lines (G/J, IV, pp. 32–36 [III, pp. 42–46]; cf. Michelet¹, II, pp. 551–561; Michelet², pp. 735–743 [III, pp. 58–68]). Peter Lombard then represented the early phase of systematic theology, the most important exponents of which were Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus and, among the commentators of Aristotle, Alexander of Hales and Albert the Great. He then addresses the question of “realism and nominalism” with reference to Ockham, but also mentions the ancient opposition between Roscelin and Abelard (G/J, IV, pp. 36–42 [III, pp. 45–52]; cf. Michelet¹, II, pp. 561–579; Michelet², pp. 743–755 [III, pp. 68–86]). His general verdict on Scholastic philosophy can be seen in the following passage: “The last thing to be noted about the Scholastics is that they not only introduced all possible formal conditions of understanding into the Church’s system of doctrine but also treated these objects, which are intelligible in themselves, according to sensible and wholly external relationships. So it can be said, on one hand, that their treatment of the Church’s doctrinal system was profound, and on the other that they made the doctrine mundane, through wholly inappropriate external relationships, so that what we have here is the worst sense of worldliness that one can adopt” (G/J, IV, pp. 42–43 [III, p. 52]; Michelet¹, II, p. 579; Michelet², pp. 755–756 [III, pp. 86–87]). The last short paragraph is devoted to the mystics Jean Gerson and Raymond of Sabunde.

The fourth and final section of the long medieval millennium is contained in the few pages concerning the Renaissance and the Reformation. However, the Renaissance and the Reformation do not represent the conclusion of the Middle Ages, since they arose from the need for renewal and deliverance predominant in that period. The Renaissance represents above all a “general progress of spirit” (G/J, IV, p. 45 [III, p. 55]; cf. Michelet¹, III, p. 11; Michelet², pp. 770–771 [III, pp. 108–109]) in relation to the Middle Ages. What kind of progress is it? The path of progress goes from the exteriority of Scholastic thought towards an initial

regaining on the part of the individual of his own selfishness (*Selbstischkeit*). It finds different expressions: the political transition from feudality to town life; the revival of the arts; but also an interest in ancient philosophy. Here Hegel mentions the early teachers of Greek in Italy, such as Chrysoloras, the diffusion of the knowledge of Greek with the coming of the Byzantines, the Aristotelians (such as Pomponazzi), the Platonists (cardinal Bessarion, Marsilio Ficino, and Pico della Mirandola), and the revival of Epicureanism, the Cabbala, and Stoicism. The Renaissance was rich in extraordinary personalities who reflected this extremely intense cultural ferment and Hegel devotes a little more space to them: the astrologer and mathematician Cardanus, Campanella, Bruno, and Vanini.

The second spiritual movement clearly oriented towards modern ideas is the Reformation. In this case too, Hegel limits himself to providing a few outlines in order to mark the progress compared to the religion of the medieval Church. Here too, on a religious plane, the principle consists in “the beginning of humanity’s reconciliation with itself” (G/J, IV, p. 62 [III, p. 75]; Michelet¹, III, p. 49; Michelet², p. 795 [III, p. 147]), in a recovery of subjective conscience. The other aspects of the Reformation, which Hegel briefly mentions here, can all be related to this principle. First of all, the primacy of faith: “the Lutheran faith is that a human being stands in a relationship with God” (G/J, IV, p. 63 [p. 76]; Michelet¹, III, p. 49; Michelet², pp. 795–796 [III, p. 147]); this is also an aspect of subjectivity; then the freedom of the Christian believer and the disappearance of the difference between layman and priest; the reading of the Holy Scripture in one’s mother tongue; and the exteriority of the Christian creed – the things which must be believed – is reduced to the essentiality of the faith nurtured by the individual. “In the Catholic church the linkage of theology with philosophy has in substance always been preserved. In the Protestant church, by contrast, the subjective religious principle parted company with philosophy. But in philosophy that principle was later authentically brought back to life” (G/J, IV, p. 67 [III, p. 79]; Michelet¹, III, pp. 54–55; Michelet², p. 799 [III, p. 152]). The overall meaning of the Reformation can be summarised as follows: “The principle of the Reformation then was the moment of spirit’s being-within-self, of its being free, its coming to itself. That is just what freedom means: to relate oneself to oneself, in the determinate content” (G/J, IV, p. 69 [p. 81]; cf. Michelet¹, III, p. 57; Michelet², p. 800 [III, p. 154]).

1.1.4.9 Modern Philosophy

Hegel introduces modernity, from Bacon to Schelling, with some general considerations which cover a good number of pages in the Michelet edition (Michelet¹, III, pp. 61–73; Michelet², pp. 801–809 [III, pp. 157–169]), while the short introduction included in the critical edition is more modest, but essential; the critical edition (from which we quote here) refers to the semester 1825–26 (G/J, IV, pp. 71–72 [III, pp. 85–86]). Modern thought in its “concrete shape” is “cognitive knowing” (*Erkennen*), science. And Hegel could add here: the absolute spirit that knows itself. This happens as a result of the development of the modern age which progresses

through a number of phases. Absolute thinking “at this stage arises essentially as something subjective in such a way that it has an antithesis in [outwardly] subsistent being. The exclusive concern is then to reconcile this opposition, to conceive the reconciliation at its ultimate extreme, to grasp the most abstract and the ultimate cleavage of being and thinking”. Hegel therefore describes the beginning of modern thought in the duality proper to Descartes and its subsequent development in the metaphysics of the subject (rationalism, but also Locke), in conflict with scepticism, finally coming to the thought of his contemporaries, represented by Kant, Fichte, and Schelling.

The short introductory page ends with a partition or periodisation which subdivides the whole of modernity into different moments. Francis Bacon and Jakob Böhme come first, but only as forerunners to the truly first philosophers who constitute the second moment: Descartes and Spinoza, to whom we must add Malebranche. The third moment comprises Locke, Leibniz, and Wolff (but Hegel also includes many others, such as Grotius, Hobbes, “popular philosophy”, Hume, the Enlightenment in general); the fourth moment is represented by Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. Not all versions of the *Lectures* adopt this scheme; elsewhere Hegel elaborates a slightly different structure: after the two precursors (Bacon and Böhme), the second period is divided into two parts: metaphysics (Descartes-Spinoza, but also Locke-Leibniz) and scepticism (Hume in particular), and finally Kant and the idealists (G/J, IV, *Anmerkungen*, p. 260, 72, 42–45; p. 289, 89). As we shall see, despite the systematic character of Hegel’s triadic logic, the discrepancies in the periodisation do not affect his understanding of the modern age of human thought.

Bacon and Böhme are therefore discussed first because they come first chronologically, although they are not directly involved in the progression of modern thought, which really starts with Descartes. Bacon’s philosophy is a “philosophy of experience”: like Socrates, he too “brought philosophy down into the mundane affairs and the homes of human beings”. It is true that the thought of the absolute does not start with experience, “but it is necessary to the scientific idea for the particularity of the content to be developed. The idea is concrete, determines itself inwardly, has its development, and complete cognition is always more developed cognition” (G/J, IV, pp. 75–76 [III, p. 89]; cf. Michelet¹, III, p. 78; Michelet², pp. 813–814 [III, p. 175]). For this reason, Hegel then devotes a few pages to the encyclopaedia in the *De augmentis scientiarum* and the methodology in the *Novum organum*, which aims at deriving inductively the “forms (*formae*)”, the “universal characteristics, species, or laws” from an examination of empirical data (G/J, IV, pp. 77–78 [III, pp. 90–93]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 81–84; Michelet², pp. 816–819 [III, pp. 177–182]).

In contrast to the “external philosophizing” of the Lord Chancellor, Böhme – the shoemaker – represents the opposite philosophical principle, subjectivity. Hegel refers to the recent rehabilitation, in his eyes perhaps excessive, of this thinker by the Romantics (perhaps alluding to Franz von Baader, Novalis, and Friedrich Schlegel, and he also uses Tennemann’s treatment (see G/J, IV, pp. 78–79 [III, pp. 93–94]; cf. *Models*, III, p. 894). But he does not fail to point out the ‘enthusiastic’ character of this author (“he was labelled an enthusiast [*Schwärmer*]”) and the

vigour of his speculative expressions. This is eloquently exemplified in a long exposition (G/J, IV, pp. 78–87 [III, pp. 93–103]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 91–119; Michelet², pp. 824–842 [III, pp. 188–216]). Yet Hegel only emphasizes what is essential, beyond the superfluous and fantastic: “His principal thought, indeed we can say his sole thought, is the Trinity (*Dreieinigkeit*): it is the universal principle in which and through which everything is, and it is indeed that principle in such a way that everything has this Trinity within it, not just as a Trinity of representation but as real” (G/J, IV, pp. 80–81 [III, p. 96]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 98–99; Michelet², pp. 829–830 [III, p. 196]). The Trinity consists of the Father, as the principle in which everything is unified (“light and darkness, love and wrath”, and so on); the Son, the *Separator*, who differentiates and acts as the principle of multiplicity; whereas “the third principle of the threefoldness is the unity of the light, the *Separator*, and the energy; this, then, is the Spirit” (G/J, IV, p. 87 [III, p. 103]; Michelet¹, III, pp. 113–114; Michelet², p. 829 [III, p. 211]). Böhme is therefore an heir of dialectic thought and a precursor of triadic dialectic, although Hegel does not hesitate to define his way of expressing concepts as “barbarous” (G/J, IV, p. 87 [III, p. 103]; cf. Michelet¹, III, p. 118; Michelet², pp. 841–842 [III, p. 216]).

“With this comment we conclude our discussion of the preliminary period of modern philosophy and proceed to its first period proper, which we begin with Descartes” (G/J, IV, p. 87 [III, p. 103]). After giving some information on Descartes’ life and his philosophical and mathematical interests on a broader level (G/J, IV, pp. 90–91 [III, pp. 106–108]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 123–126; Michelet², pp. 845–847 [III, pp. 220–223]), Hegel provides a very succinct presentation of Cartesian thought, following the theme underlying the fourth part of the *Discourse* and the more extensive analysis contained in the *Meditations*. For Hegel, the Cartesian doubt expresses the need for a thought devoid of presuppositions. The freedom of this thought is stressed by Hegel to such an extent that he states that, after the remote period of Greek Neoplatonism, only with Descartes do we finally have philosophy again. “The philosophical theology of the Middle Ages did not have the free thought that proceeds from itself as its principle”; this, for Hegel, is the opinion (albeit dictated by other reasons) that induced seventeenth-century historians of philosophy (Thomas Stanley) to think that their work came to a conclusion with the end of ancient thought: then Christianity appeared, after which and within which philosophy “was no longer necessary” (G/J, IV, pp. 88–89 [III, p. 105]; Michelet¹, III, p. 121; Michelet², p. 844 [III, p. 218]; see the note in G/J, IV, *Anmerkungen*, pp. 288–289).

Descartes’ *cogito* leads to *sum*, it expresses the identity of being and thinking. This is the second important point in Cartesian philosophy. Kant is right to reject this identity because of its immediacy; but Descartes can be credited with having affirmed in this identity, albeit immediate, the inseparability of being and thinking (“they are inseparable, that is, they constitute an identity”), and his position resists the objections raised by Gassendi (G/J, IV, pp. 93–94 [III, pp. 110–111]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 130–132; Michelet², pp. 850–853 [III, pp. 228–230]). The ontological proof concerning the necessity of existence included in the idea, and the “representation of absolutely perfect being” reassert the inseparability of being and

thinking. As is known, Hegel admired the argument of Anselm, whom he mentions here too, whereas he considered the other proof brought forward by Descartes as “empirical and naïve”, “not philosophically or metaphysically demonstrative”, since it is based on the search for the cause of the idea of God within us (G/J, IV, p. 96 [pp. 112–113]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 137–142; Michelet², pp. 855–859 [III, pp. 233–238]).

The certainty of every other type of knowledge depends upon the first attribute of God, his truthfulness, which guarantees above all the connection between thinking and being in the case of the real being of extended substance as distinct from the subject (G/J, IV, pp. 97–98 [III, pp. 113–114]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 143–144; Michelet², pp. 859–869 [III, pp. 239–240]), that is, in the case of the *res extensa* as distinct from the *res cogitans*. In this context, Hegel attributes great importance to the definitions and reflections elaborated by Descartes concerning the categorial concepts of substance and attribute, both owing to the echoes and the developments they were to produce shortly after in Spinoza, and – as in the case of extended substance – because of the mechanistic approach characterising Cartesian physics, which he discusses in greater detail. Instead there is only a final brief reference to the question of the “relation of the soul to the body” (G/J, IV, pp. 99–102 [III, pp. 115–119]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 145–157; Michelet², pp. 860–869 [III, pp. 241–252]).

“Spinozism is related to Cartesianism simply as a consistent carrying out or execution of Descartes’s principle” (G/J, IV, p. 102 [III, p. 119]; Michelet¹, III, p. 157; Michelet², p. 869 [III, p. 252]). This radical statement, which appears after the presentation of Descartes, marks the beginning of the treatment of Spinoza. Together with Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, and Proclus, albeit for different reasons, Spinoza is a thinker Hegel continually studied, and he became one of the most profound elements of his philosophical education because of certain concepts and conclusions which he shared.¹² From the years of his studies in Tübingen, together with Schelling, Hegel read Jacobi’s *Ueber die Lehre of Spinoza*; in this period what he most appreciated was Spinoza’s virtue and morality. But it was during the early Jena years that Hegel, again with Schelling, started to question Spinoza’s thought; in 1802–1803 he had the opportunity to contribute to the edition of Spinoza’s works of H.E.G. Paulus (cf. G/J, IV, p. 307, note 102,7 [III, p. 119, note 103]). But no significant evolution seems to have taken place in Hegel’s interpretation of Spinoza from his writings of the Jena years to the *Lectures* of the Berlin period, and in Hegel’s eyes Spinoza continued to represent the moment of the unity of substance, the highest point metaphysics can possibly attain using this category.

“Spinoza’s system itself is on the whole very simple”, and Hegel presents it through a few important features which summarise its meaning as a whole. “Only absolute substance truly is; it alone is actual or is actuality”. It is unity of being and thinking, it is “that whose concept contains its existence within itself”. The

¹² See in particular F. Chiereghin, *L’influenza dello spinozismo sulla formazione della filosofia hegeliana* (Padua, 1961); Id., *Dialettica dell’assoluto e ontologia della soggettività* (Trento, 1980) pp. 96–108; see also Düsing, pp. 170–177.

universal is substance; the particular does not depend on itself but on substance; hence it has no reality, but is simple negation of substantiality: *omnis determinatio est negatio*. "As a singular thing, the soul or the mind is something limited. It is by negation that a singular thing is. Therefore it [the singular thing] does not have genuine actuality" (G/J, IV, p. 104 [III, p. 121]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 161–162; Michelet², pp. 872–873 [III, pp. 256–257]). On the basis of these few elements, which reflect an interpretation very similar to the one he had formulated of Parmenides' being, Hegel adds further determinations of Spinoza's system and some judgements which show the limited validity of this system. Indeed, he only partially concedes with Spinoza the truth of absolute substance: "It is what is true, but it is not yet the whole true". He proceeds by showing how much truth is contained in Spinoza's thought, but also how much of this thought remains unsatisfying (*unbefriedigend*). Spinoza's substance is not the whole truth because in it there is "no development, no life, no spirituality or activity; [...] with Spinozism everything goes into the abyss but nothing emerges from it". In a word: what is lacking is spirit (*Geist*), what is lacking is that which concretizes the abstract universal element. "Leibniz takes individuality, the opposite mode, as his principle, and in that way outwardly integrates Spinoza's system" (G/J, IV, pp. 104–105 [III, p. 122]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 166–167; Michelet², p. 873 [III, pp. 257–258]).

Analogous observations are applicable to the geometrical method. Hegel tests its consistency by examining the definitions with which the first part of the *Ethics* begins, and showing in these definitions true concepts, which "are adopted directly or presupposed, not deduced", a mathematical evidence which "is only appropriate for the finite sciences of the understanding", but not for the science of the absolute (G/J, IV, pp. 105–107 [III, pp. 122–123]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 168–172; Michelet², pp. 874–879 [III, pp. 258–264]). Then Hegel discusses the attributes of substance and the modes more analytically, and, once again with an attitude of agreement-disagreement, he examines the problem of evil. Here the inadequate element is the partial determination of freedom. Freedom is "no mere privation or negation", as Spinoza asserts: "in distinguishing itself explicitly from the corporeal, spirit is substantial and actual, that *spirit is*, and is no mere privation or negation. In the same way *freedom is*, and is no mere privation" (G/J, IV, p. 110 [III, p. 127]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 193–194).

As a conclusion to all the judgements expressed on Spinoza we can consider that concerning the accusation of atheism (G/J, IV, pp. 111–112 [III, pp. 127–128]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 194; Michelet², pp. 889–891 [III, pp. 280–282]) formulated by Jacobi in his famous letters and, before him, by Wolff. According to this opinion, by considering God as identical to the finite world, Spinoza's thought constitutes a negation of the reality of God, hence it corresponds to atheism. Hegel thinks that this is not applicable to Spinoza's case. Rather, Spinoza's system "could be better called acosmism" because all natural things are mere modifications of the only substance. His atheism, if any, should be referred to the fact that in his view "God is not grasped as spirit". But there are many other thinkers, among whom even theologians, who maintain ideas similar to those of Spinoza, that "God is the unknown, and speak of God only as the almighty and highest being, and the like. They are

worse atheists than Spinoza, for they accord the status of what is true to the finite as such”.

Finally, Hegel formulates a few short considerations on Spinoza’s morals. It can all be condensed into the principle “that the finite spirit has its truth in the moral sphere, and is therefore moral, when it directs its knowing and willing toward God” (G/J, IV, p. 112 [III, pp. 128–129]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 195–196; Michelet², p. 886 [III, p. 275]). And this is contemplation of everything *sub specie aeterni*, it is man’s liberation from the bondage of the passions.

A solution analogous to that of Spinoza can be found in Malebranche. Since he cannot think that the ideas of the mind derive from sensible experience or that they are a product of the human mind itself, he turns them into as many divine ideas, whose vision in God provides us with a definite science of the world. In Malebranche – observes Hegel – this vision of all things in God takes on a strong religious connotation. Thus “we see in Malebranche’s noble soul the very same content as in Spinoza, only in a more pious form” (G/J, IV, p. 116 [III, p. 133]; cf. Michelet¹, III, p. 197; Michelet², p. 896 [III, p. 290]).

The duo Locke-Leibniz, which constitutes the second period in the development of modern thought (the first is represented by Descartes-Spinoza, without considering the very first moment represented by Bacon-Böhmé), represents the principle opposed to the absolute and the universal of substance: according to Locke and his empiricism, the universal in knowledge must be derived from individual experience; according to Leibniz, it is the monad – the singular or the individual, that which for Spinoza “only perishes and is transitory” – that constitutes the principle.

Locke is certainly not one of the thinkers that Hegel had much sympathy for. His system is defined as “a metaphysical sort of empiricism, and it is the procedure in the ordinary sciences” (G/J, IV, p. 117 [III, p. 134]; Michelet¹, III, p. 208; Michelet², p. 903 [III, p. 298]). Indeed, the chapter on Locke is followed by a few pages devoted to Grotius, Hobbes, Pufendorf, and Newton, with the addition, in the Michelet edition, of Cudworth, Clarke, and Wollaston (political and natural sciences) (G/J, IV, pp. 116–123 and 123–128 [III, pp. 133–139 and 140–144]; Michelet¹, III, pp. 203–224 and 224–233; Michelet², pp. 901–912 and 912–920 [III, pp. 295–313 and 313–324]). This is the richness of Locke’s empirical principle, which manifests itself in vast and fertile fields in the modern period; but it is not enough to induce Hegel to recognise its importance. He does not even mention Locke’s political thought, his work on tolerance, or his religious writings. He continues to focus his attention on the *Essay* and – we could even say – on the single question of the empirical origin of ideas, whether they are sensible representations or real categories such as the idea of cause, and he explains them all with same “superficial” and “trivial” explanations (G/J, IV, pp. 121–122 [III, p. 138]; cf. Michelet¹, III, p. 222; Michelet², p. 912 [III, p. 312]): we derive ideas from experience by means of abstraction. This is empiricism, but it has also been oriented here in a metaphysical sense, because, we believe, it has been used to explain, albeit insufficiently, the universal, the abstract, which remains the specific object of knowledge.

In Leibniz (G/J, IV, pp. 128–136 [III, pp. 145–155]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 233–255; Michelet², pp. 921–937 [III, pp. 325–348]) the metaphysical approach

is more explicit; but, as we said above, Leibniz raised the individual itself to the level of metaphysics, thus losing sight of the absolute. Leibniz's God, "the monad of monads", is a solution totally extrinsic to the problem of the absolute, and the contradiction involved in according substantiality to both God and the finite remains unresolved (G/J, IV, p. 134 [III, pp. 152–153]; cf. Michelet¹, III, p. 249; Michelet², p. 933 [III, p. 342]). In the case of Leibniz too, Hegel deals primarily with one work, the *Monadology*, following its systematic lines, and the problems of the *Theodicy*, "a very famous work but no longer to our taste", the *Treatise concerning the Principles of Nature and Grace*, and the controversies with Descartes and Spinoza are considered of secondary importance. This is therefore "a metaphysics that proceeds from the limited determinations of the understanding concerning absolute multiplicity, such that coherence can only be grasped as continuity, and as a result absolute unity is annulled from the outset. Absolute being-for-self is abstractly presupposed, and God must then mediate among the individuals and determine the harmony in the changes of the individual monads" (G/J, IV, p. 136 [III, p. 154]; cf. Michelet¹, III, p. 255; Michelet², p. 937 [III, p. 348]).

After Leibniz, who shares with Locke the task of representing the moment of the individual, in contrast to Descartes and Spinoza's metaphysics of the absolute, Hegel briefly describes some figures of the Enlightenment in England, France, and Germany, showing how the metaphysics of the moderns gradually disappeared, and ending with a few pages on Hume's scepticism. He starts with a short presentation of Wolff (G/J, IV, pp. 136–139 [III, pp. 155–158]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 256–263; Michelet², pp. 937–943 [III, 348–356]), whose philosophy is "a systematizing of Leibniz", which greatly contributed to Germany's intellectual growth, and finally he elaborates the following considerations on "metaphysical and popular philosophy" (G/J, IV, pp. 140–146 [III, pp. 158–166]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 263; Michelet², pp. 943–945 [III, pp. 356–360]). Modern metaphysics – one might say from Descartes to Wolff – has become involved in contradictions that are still unsolved: "thought and being, God and the world, good and evil, divine prescience and human freedom". The solution to these oppositions has been entrusted to God, but with little success, and the contradictions remain unresolved. Modern metaphysics reconsiders questions which had already been addressed by ancient metaphysics, but brings them to a greater degree of contradiction. This metaphysics is opposed by "popular philosophy", "reflective philosophy or reflective empiricism", and so forth, which include what is also called the "Enlightenment", that is to say, the exercise of "sound human understanding" (G/J, IV, pp. 141–142 [III, pp. 160–161]). On a religious plane, the Enlightenment produces "what is called Deism, that is, a general belief in a God"; Rousseau, for example, is the supporter of "pure Deism", whereas others, like d'Holbach, turned to materialism. In England the questions of morals were particularly discussed, especially among the Scottish philosophers, whereas the English thought elaborated by Cudworth, Clarke, and Wollaston remained "within the forms of a very commonplace metaphysics of the understanding". The most famous Scottish thinkers are Ferguson, Reid, Beattie, and Dugald Stewart, a contemporary of Hegel (G/J, IV, pp. 144–145 [III, pp. 162–165]).

Last of all, Hegel deals separately with David Hume, whom he considers to be a sceptic (G/J, IV, pp. 146–148 [III, pp. 166–169]; cf. Michelet¹, III, 275–281; Michelet², pp. 951–956 [III, pp. 369–375]). He confines himself to Hume's critique of the idea of cause and to the impossibility of translating the empirical observation of succession into the necessary connection between cause and effect: "the Kantian reflection sets out from this beginning, and we now pass over to it" (G/J, p. 148 [III, p. 169]; Michelet¹, III, p. 280; Michelet², p. 955 [III, p. 374]).

Hegel's consideration of Kant's philosophy is highly structured and reappears in different moments in the development of his thought. It assumed stable and clearly defined features right from the early years in Jena (in *Faith and Knowledge*), and was present in Hegel's major works, from the *Phenomenology* to the *Logic*, the *Encyclopaedia*, the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, and the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.¹³ It is very difficult to separate the interpretative moments inspired by a theoretical interest from those concerning a historiographical synthesis – granted that it is admissible and possible to do so. Indeed, even the historiographical interest is intrinsically oriented to grasping the meaning of Kant's philosophy within the contemporary debate and understanding its function in relation to the place assigned to it by the development of the spirit.

For a more complete picture of the relationship between Hegel and Kant's thought, through the various phases punctuating the development of the problems related to Hegelianism, we refer the reader to the critical studies on the subject. We must limit our scope and concentrate on the Kant of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, which adopt more objective criteria in presenting the general outlines of Hegel's interpretation of Kant.

In the last chapter of the *Vorlesungen*, modern thought is represented by Kant, Fichte and Schelling; moreover, Hegel also discusses Jacobi in connection with Kant. In the 1825–26 *Lectures* (cf. G/J, IV), the development of this discussion presents an interesting methodological novelty which is not present elsewhere: Hegel abandons his usual means of presentation in which the thinkers are presented separately one after another, and interweaves the thoughts of the first three philosophers (Kant-Jacobi-Fichte), leaving Schelling last of all, almost as a conclusion to an intense and problematic discussion. The interweaving takes place as follows: Hegel starts with Kant and presents the content of the first *Critique* including the transcendental analytics; he then moves on to Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, giving long explanations of its content up to the theoretical 'I' (G/J, IV, pp. 149–156 and 156–162 [III, pp. 170–178 and 178–184]). At this point he returns to Kant and the doctrine of the unconditioned in the "transcendental Dialectic"; it is here that Hegel involves Jacobi's thought, discussing its principles of knowledge compared to those presented in Kant's *Critique* and coming to the immediate knowing which is faith (G/J, IV, pp. 162–167 [III, pp. 184–189]). He then returns again to Kant and explains his moral doctrine compared with Fichte's practical 'I' (G/J, IV, pp. 167–169 [III,

¹³ Cf. in particular L. Lugarini, 'La "confutazione" hegeliana della filosofia critica', in *Hegel interprete di Kant*, ed. by V. Verra (Naples, 1981), p. 15.

pp. 190–192]); finally he comes back to Kant a last time in order to discuss the reflective teleological judgement and the practical postulate of the existence of God, again making a comparison with Jacobi concerning postulates and immediate knowledge (G/J, IV, pp. 169–179 [III, pp. 192–201]). The last pages of the chapter are all devoted to Schelling and deal with the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, the Identity philosophy, and the philosophy of nature (G/J, IV, pp. 179–188 [III, pp. 201–211]).

This particular way of proceeding, which disrupts the usual progression of authors one after another and simplifies the context of German contemporary philosophy (the Michelet editions also include F. Schlegel, Schleiermacher, Novalis, Fries, Bouterwek, and Krug: see Michelet¹, III, pp. 315–420 and Michelet², pp. 976–1054 [III, pp. 410–512]), gives rise to a brief discussion of contemporary thought, which Hegel considers to be the background closest to his own. The general conclusions to the entire course of lessons on the history of philosophy become clear. Hegel does not formulate them explicitly, but is very effective in suggesting them as the conclusion of a lively discussion. What are the fundamental features, what is the problem of contemporary philosophy left unsolved by Kant, Jacobi, Fichte, and Schelling? Kant has the merit of having posited the subject as an *a priori* condition of knowledge, whose categories guarantee experience with universality and necessity, although true knowing is limited to phenomena (G/J, IV, pp. 153 and 155–156 [III, pp. 175–176 and 177–178]). Kant's philosophy of knowledge is taken up by Fichte, whose philosophy "should be regarded as a more consistent presentation and development of Kant's philosophy". In particular, the three fundamental propositions of the *Wissenschaftslehre* (the 'I' posits itself as self-positing, the 'I' counterposits the 'not-I', the 'I' posits itself as limited and as limiting the 'not-I') imply a rigorous presentation of the subject as absolute and explain the categorial system not as if it corresponded to the assertion of an empirical fact, but as resulting from a "derivation" (*Ableitung*), as a "construction of the categories of thought from the 'I'" (G/J, IV, pp. 156–157 [III, pp. 178–180]).

In the transcendental dialectic of the first *Critique*, Kant addresses the problem of the unconditioned: he arrives, that is, at Fichte's starting point; but the idea of the unconditioned, in all its expressions, remains empty for him because it cannot be provided to experience nor to intuition. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that, in the eyes of reason, the presence of the unconditioned produces contradictions, such as the antinomies of the cosmological idea, in an analogous way to what happens in Fichte's thought, and that the mutual limitation between the 'I' and the 'not-I' leads to a contradictory situation which has to be resolved (G/J, IV, pp. 161–164 [III, pp. 183–187]).

At this point Hegel introduces his consideration of Jacobi's thought, which he considers as parallel to that of Kant. For Jacobi too cognition is finite and must necessarily be limited to the chain of proximate causes constituting nature. The unconditioned breaks the limitation but eludes the cognitive powers and is the object of an immediate knowing (*das unmittelbare Wissen*) merged with 'faith' (G/J, IV, pp. 166–167 [III, pp. 188–189]). Kant and Fichte try to resolve the problem of the absolute only within the sphere of practical reason; but the solution they propose is

an abstract formalism unable to reconcile the absolute itself with the concrete character of experience (G/J, IV, p. 169 [III, p. 191]). Analogously, Jacobi appeals to religious faith, to an immediate knowledge that avoids the mediation of 'real' knowledge (G/J, IV, pp. 174–179 [III, pp. 197–201]). In the conceptions of these three thinkers (Kant, Fichte, and Jacobi) Hegel perceives the insufficiencies of "the reflective philosophy of subjectivity", which he had already pointed out, more than 20 years before, in his work *Faith and Knowledge* (1803).

Hegel concludes this chapter (and the entire historical course of thought) with Schelling. He does not incorporate him into the discussion of the three previous thinkers, perhaps out of respect or perhaps because he judges him to be closer to his own thought. Indeed, in Schelling he does not emphasize the simple subjectivism of the philosophy of reflection but rather an equivalent amount of objectivity that compensates the subjective aspect. This results in an identity philosophy presenting the absolute as the object of an artistic intuition and, in the philosophy of nature, as the point in which the polarity of the unconscious is cancelled by cancelling within itself the opposite pole represented by consciousness (G/J, IV, pp. 180–181 [III, pp. 202–204]). But, in this case too, is this nothing but the much-deplored immediate knowledge he had condemned in the three previous philosophers? Hegel does not present the situation exactly like this; indeed, he concludes praising Schelling's philosophy of nature for its dialectic progression by triads, which corresponds to an insertion of objectivity into the conception of the absolute as a unilateral subject (G/J, IV, pp. 186–187 [III, pp. 208–211]). Even though he does not reduce Schelling's identity to immediate knowledge, he nevertheless suggests this to the reader. And he fundamentally suggests his own conception of the absolute, as a dialectic synthesis of all oppositions and all contradictions afflicting contemporary German philosophy. "This then is the standpoint of the current age, and with it I now conclude the series of spiritual configurations. I have tried to exhibit their necessary procession out of one another, so that each philosophy necessarily presupposes the one preceding it. Our standpoint is the cognition of spirit, the knowledge of the idea as spirit, as absolute spirit, which as absolute opposes itself to another spirit, to the finite spirit. To recognize that absolute spirit can be *for it* is this finite spirit's principle and vocation" (G/J, IV, p. 188 [III, p. 212]; cf. Michelet¹, III, pp. 461–462; Michelet², pp. 1083–1084 [III, pp. 552–553]).

1.1.5 Historiographical Methodology

In presenting the *Einleitung* we have already dealt briefly with the pages devoted to the "form of treatment" (*Art der Behandlung*) (Hoffmeister, p. 136; G/J, I, pp. 159 and 233 [I, p. 64]; Michelet¹, I, p. 136; Michelet², p. 92 [I, p. 114]), that is, the historiographical methodology which, according to Hegel, is a consequence (*Folge*) of the concept of the history of philosophy. The methodology, in its principles at least, ensues from the concepts of 'development' and 'concrete'. We shall now look more closely at what we saw briefly in the introductory section. Hegel explains these

methodological principles theoretically, but we must also consider them on a practical level, with reference to the actual historiographical behaviour adopted by Hegel in his *Lectures*.

The first methodological consideration is determined by the need – when dealing with philosophical systems, especially in the case of ancient thought – to limit oneself to principles and their development. This is due to the lack of time in a semester, during which it should be possible to present the thousands of years of thought as a whole; but in the case of the philosophies of the past this is also motivated by reasons of a theoretical nature. As for the philosophies of the past, what is still interesting today are the “principles” and not the secondary problems that have disappeared with time (Hoffmeister, pp. 136–137; G/J, I, pp. 233–234 [I, pp. 64–65]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 57; Michelet², p. 33 [I, p. 38]). In the field of biology, for example, Democritus’ atomism and Descartes’ mechanical philosophy lie outside our interest today because we now possess much more valid and advanced principles in this field. Hegel is referring here to the finalism of the romantic philosophy of nature (Schelling), possibly related not only to the finalism of the third Kantian *Critique* but also to the Aristotelian concept of *entelechia*, which received his explicit approval. Analogous observations can be made regarding ancient atomism, which was renewed and revived by the moderns. To limit oneself to the principle of a philosophy also means ignoring the copious biographical, literary, and historical information which text books are full of. The “history of the reception” is also beyond the scope of the historian (Hoffmeister, p. 137; G/J, I, p. 235 [I, p. 65]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 136; Michelet², p. 92 [I, p. 115]).

This is what Hegel effectively does in the *Lectures*. We hear expressions like the “main principle” (*Hauptmoment*) or the “fundamental thought” of a thinker innumeral times, and these should serve to establish a criterion of choice and a point of reference and synthesis in the presentation of that thinker’s philosophy. However, with the major philosophers at least, Hegel always provides a biographical profile too and cites the works produced and the editions available. In the case of Socrates, the presentation of his thought runs in parallel with the events of his life, up until the moment of the “tragic fate” of his death. In my view, Hegel does not contradict in practice the methodological principle he had set down in theory; rather, he interprets it and moderates the total exclusions with essential information, avoiding impersonal and abstract presentations and making his treatment “concrete”, giving it a universality rich in real elements, which is a feature proper to the philosophical “idea”.

The second methodological rule is inspired by the polemic against erudite historiography, “mere historical knowledge” (*bloß historische Kenntnis*). He believes that historiographical erudition limits the task of the historian to recollecting the mere past, not contemplating the value, for the present time too, of philosophical thoughts. For Hegel, only that which is external has passed away, men, their destinies, etc.; but “the thing” (*die Sache*) they have brought out is preserved. We are not dealing, therefore, with historical learning, but with “a present time” (*ein Präsentes*) in which we are ourselves present. And here Hegel reiterates his underlying theoretical position: that the history of philosophy is identical to philosophy (Hoffmeister,

pp. 138–139; G/J, I, pp. 156–157; Michelet¹, I, pp. 47–50; Michelet², pp. 25–27 [I, pp. 29–31]).

The polemic against historiographical erudition is a constant element: Hegel's favourite targets are Brucker and the previous generation, although he often reserves some scorn for Tiedemann, Tennemann, and Schleiermacher too. The 'hypercriticism' of philologist historiographers like Schleiermacher and Brandis is left with a crucial question, not resolvable otherwise: to determine which of the Platonic dialogues are authentic and which spurious. But it would be erroneous to think that Hegel is only a speculative historian. Indeed, the original texts are constantly present in his work; in the cases of Plato and Aristotle, as well as Spinoza, Hegel himself carried out the translation into German; and he quotes long passages followed by his commentary and interpretative observations. Erudition does not mean, therefore, the necessary documents, but that kind of historiographical learning that remains extrinsic to the thing (to use Hegel's words) and is irrelevant with respect to the possibility of getting into the 'presence' of an author's thought. But even this principle of "being present" is better explained and partially corrected thanks to a subsequent methodological norm which we will look at below.

Connected to the need for these projections of the historian into the present is the use of the category of progress (*Fortgang*) in order to establish the continuity of the "degrees of progress" (*Stufengang*) from the past to the present, from the ancient to the modern. We could say that the historian proceeds (and must proceed) from what is abstract to what is concrete, from what is simpler and poorer in determinations to what is richer and more complex: what is concrete, observes Hegel, "is the in-itself and for-itself (*das An- und Fürsichseiende*), the unity of the being-in-itself and the being-for-itself" (Hoffmeister, p. 139; G/J, I, p. 157). Thales' concept of water but even Parmenides' concept of being, Hegel insists in the *Lectures*, express indeterminate thoughts lacking in content, compared to the greater richness of Aristotle's concepts. We must highlight the gradual progression from the former to the latter, and how the latter therefore represents an advance with respect to the former. The example chosen is easy and convincing, but the norm is not always easy to apply. Difficulty and perplexity arise when trying to preserve gradualness and continuity over long periods. This is the case, for example, of the tripartition between ancient, medieval, and modern. But, for opposite reasons, difficulties arise also when the temporal phases follow one another too rapidly, so the degree of progress seems to disappear. Plato's philosophy is so great that it can be placed on the same level as Aristotle's. In these cases, the concept of 'alterity' seems more appropriate than the category of progress. But this would break an inviolable Hegelian methodological canon.

Hence the danger of schematic descriptions and abstractions in Hegel's historiographical design when he encounters difficulties in preserving the continuity of historical progress and, at the same time, in drawing, with more or less audacious expedients, its progression according to an ascending movement of different phases. In these cases too, his interpretative sensitivity succeeds in making us forget, as though it was nothing but useless sophistry, the unavoidable task of elaborating a judgement on the progress and suggests broader reflections more in line with the concrete situation.

The law of progress also serves to formulate a norm that prevents us from bringing all the problems addressed by the ancients to the level of the present. This is a rectification of the excesses of “presenteeism”. Certain ideas remain indeterminate among the ancients, and we cannot expect them to deal with our problems. In Hegel’s view, “we should bear in mind this aspect, and not to demand that ancient philosophies develop contents that can only be provided by a more mature and concrete consciousness” (Hoffmeister, p. 141; G/J, I, p. 158). Here Hegel again uses the example of Thales, whom Flatt (in a work on his theism or lack of it) involved in a dialogue concerning terms and problems which were certainly foreign to his time (see above, p. 198).

In connection with the category of progressive development we should also mention the global consideration of the whole systematic picture of the history of philosophy as possessing necessity, without any arbitrariness. According to Hegel, “we have to consider the individual philosophies as stages in the development of the *one* Idea. Each philosophy displays itself as a necessary thought-determination, or category, of the Idea (*Denkbestimmung der Idee*). In the succession of philosophies there is nothing arbitrary (*Willkürlichkeit*); the order in which they emerge is settled by necessity [...]. This is the dialectic of these specific categories” (Hoffmeister, pp. 145–146 [pp. 107–108]; G/J, I, p. 162). And we can posit it as the supreme methodological norm that guarantees the historical reality of philosophy – and the consequent historiography that reconstructs it – with the necessity proper to scientific knowledge. In conclusion, we can say that Hegel discovered the history of philosophy in conjunction with the discovery of dialectic as the methodology of theoretical and historical thought.

However, to avoid ending with such an exalted consideration of the method, which is certainly in accordance with the premises of Hegel’s thought but is not explicitly thematized yet, we must remain with our feet on the ground and mention some constants to which the structure of each chapter of Hegel’s history seems to adhere. As we mentioned above, the rule of limiting oneself to the ‘principle’ of a philosophy must not be understood literally. In many cases, these ‘principles’ have the function of governing the structuring of a system into problems. This happens, for example, in the case of the presentation of Aristotle’s thought; the same happens with philosophers whose thought is complex. Moreover, as concerns the system, Hegel does not hesitate to assert ‘his own’, in the formulation it had received in the *Encyclopaedia*, as though it were the only possible system. This becomes evident in the presentations of Plato and Aristotle: metaphysics coincides with logic (dialectic) and theology; the philosophy of nature is equivalent to physics and cosmology; the philosophy of the spirit (the most original part of Hegel’s thought, the equivalent of which is difficult to find in other thinkers) includes psychology, morals, and politics or ethics. Such a structured system is present in Plato and Aristotle, but a system is also present in the Pythagoreans, which is a system comprising the theory of numbers (logic), cosmology, psychology, ‘practical’ philosophy, and also ethics (*das Sittliche*) strictly understood, i.e. in a Hegelian sense (G/J, II, pp. 46–47 [II, pp. 51–53]). Even in Heraclitus a system is present: dialectic, but also the philosophy of nature; the general principle is not limited to what is merely logical:

“[Heraclitus] did not rest content with the purely logical, but gave his idea a real expression too. This real shape belongs basically to the philosophy of nature; in other words, its form is natural rather than logical”, but the idea also acquires a real expression; this real figure is primarily of a philosophical and natural kind (G/J, II, p. 75 [II, p. 76]); it corresponds to the naturalistic notion of fire, as in the case of the other Ionians. Despite the explicit and clearly determined (in a Hegelian sense) denominations of the parts of the system, I would say that this indiscriminate use of the system itself, adjustable to everybody, is a didactic stratagem particularly useful from a methodological point of view, and not an intention to reduce the whole variety of meanings implicit in the apparent nominal identity of the internal subdivisions of the system to a single cliché.

A systematic presentation is a methodological principle that favours a rather impersonal structure of thought, at least as expressed in the identical denominations of the parts of the system. This approach contrasts with Hegel's presentation, whose point of reference is always the personality of the various thinkers. He abandons personal reference only when he elaborates introductions to the great historical phases or a system professed by a large number of thinkers. Let us mention some of these introductions: Greek philosophy and its early period from Thales to Anaxagoras (G/J, II, pp. 1–8 [pp. 9–17]); the Sophists, Socrates, the Socratics (G/J, II, pp. 108–110 [II, pp. 109–111]); dogmatism and scepticism (Michelet¹, II, pp. 249–255; Michelet², pp. 538–541 [II, pp. 232–236]), and scepticism itself is described with a mainly impersonal approach (Michelet¹, pp. 358–403), which indicates Hegel's dominant interest in logic and his arguments for the transition from Plato-Aristotle to Neoplatonism; and Neoplatonism itself (Michelet¹, II, pp. 403–418; Michelet², pp. 633–644 [II, pp. 374–387]). The second period includes an extensive treatment of the Middle Ages – not merely within the introductory section – without explicitly associating the ideas with the personalities who formulated them: as a result, we have the introduction on the “idea” of Christianity, but also the theme of the “Church Fathers” (G/J, IV, pp. 1–16 [III, pp. 15–29]) and the subsequent reflection on the Arabs (G/J, IV, pp. 17–20 [III, pp. 29–32]), where what prevails is providing information; the paragraph on the Scholastics is more wide-ranging, although it adopts an impersonal form too (G/J, IV, pp. 20–31 [pp. 32–41]); finally, we have the paragraph on the Renaissance and the Reformation (G/J, IV, pp. 45–49 and 61–70 [III, pp. 55–59 and 75–81]). We also find a few passages with an impersonal treatment in the third period too, the modern age, but the major writers, both ancient and modern, are presented in a personal light.

The marked prevalence of a presentation by thinker may be related to a specific concept in Hegel's “philosophy of history”: the history of philosophy is the history of the idea of the spirit of the world, but this idea is realised by means of human individualities. This means, represented by “conservative” individuals and “world-historical” individuals (*welthistorische Menschen*), is necessary, although in the end the individual is sacrificed in his individuality, and what remains are mere

impersonal realisations of the Idea.¹⁴ Something similar takes place in the history of philosophy: the history of philosophy “presents us with the series of noble spirits or gallery of heroes of thinking reason who, in the strength of this reason, have delved deeply into the essence of things, into the essence of nature and spirit, into the essence of God, and by their labors have acquired for us the greatest treasure, the treasure of rational knowledge”. These words were pronounced by Hegel during the inaugural speech to his course of lessons in Berlin on 24th October 1820 (Hoffmeister, p. 21; G/J, I, p. 5 [p. 166]; cf. Michelet¹, I, p. 20; Michelet², p. 4 [I, p. 1]). These heroes and noble spirits are people, and they are different from one another, each of them is characterised by his own heroism and his own nobility. This theme of the personality of philosophy is similarly emphasized in his work on the *Differenz*: “The living spirit that dwells in a philosophy demands to be born of a kindred spirit if it is to unveil itself; [...] the true peculiarity of a philosophy lies in the interesting individuality which is the organic shape that Reason has built for itself out of the material of a particular age. The particular speculative Reason [of a later time] finds in it spirit of its spirit, flesh of its flesh, it intuitively itself in it as one and the same and yet as another living being” (*Differenz*, pp. 9–10 and 11–12 [pp. 86 and 88–89]). The category of personal individuality requires alterity, but equally it requires the unity of an identical speculative reason. And the “heroes” mentioned in the Berlin course 20 years later will carry out their tasks by virtue of one and the same reason. Whether they are interesting individualities or noble spirits: in both cases they are nothing but the means which “thinking reason” uses. And the narrator of the events must certainly be attentive to the means employed and the paths followed, but he must be no less attentive to the one end, the one “treasure of rational knowledge”.

1.1.6 *The History of the Work's Reception*

The reception of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (which, as was said above, appeared posthumously in the years 1833–36) coincides with much of the philosophical historiography of the mid and late nineteenth century not only in Germany but also throughout Europe. Hegel's theoretical thought, the historiographical methodology followed, and the subsequent interpretations long continued to exert a profound influence on the historians of philosophy. To outline this now, even roughly, would mean anticipating a series of problems and debates which belong to the last volume of this history, and so we refer the reader to this here.¹⁵

¹⁴ Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, in *Werke*, vol. XII, ed. by E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel (Frankfurt a. M.) 1970, pp. 33–55 (English transl. by J. Sibley, New York, 1900, pp. 20–37).

¹⁵ Initial bibliographical information concerning the main outlines of the reception of Hegel can be found in Düsing, see in particular the paragraphs entitled ‘Die Forschung’ at the beginning of each chapter (pp. 7 ff., 42 ff., 55 ff., 97 ff., 134 ff., 161 ff., and 196 ff.).

We will merely attempt here to add a few considerations suggested by three texts which, for different reasons, are of considerable significance to this aspect of Hegel's reception. The first, dated 1838, is a review by the Schellingian F. Sengler of the third volume of Hegel's *Lectures* (philosophy from the Middle Ages to modernity) which expresses a polemical position that reflected an existing and unresolved speculative attitude. The other two were written by two followers of Hegel who were soon to become his opponents: one is a review written in 1835 by L. Feuerbach concerning the first two volumes of the *Lectures*; the other was written in 1843 by E. Zeller, who places Hegel's work together with the historiography of ancient philosophy produced in Germany during the previous 50 years.¹⁶ These three texts concur in considering the *Vorlesungen* as an expression of the absoluteness of Hegel's thought. According to Sengler, this absoluteness is the result of the acquisition of an "encyclopedia" of knowledge which does not only contain the results of the sciences, but is rooted in the centuries-old development of human thought itself (HJL, 31, 1838, II, p. 835). For Feuerbach, Hegel's thought represents an emancipation from the limits of Kant's thing-in-itself, which alone makes it possible to elaborate a history of philosophy which is really *allumfassend*, *allgemein*, *absolut* (*Sämtliche Werke*, II, p. 2). Finally, according to Zeller, the conquest of a logical law (dialectic) which coincides with the historical law (philosophical history) makes a truly unitary and organic consideration of the whole of human thought possible (Zeller, p. 51). In any case, the three writers are all interested in the 'systematic' aspect of Hegel's historiographical work, and they all show a preference for the 'system' in its entirety rather than its parts taken separately, an inclination which was to characterise the whole of the nineteenth century.

In other words, they share a feeling of admiration for the greatness of Hegel's general design, but do not conceal their doubts concerning general questions. According to Sengler, as in all of his works, here Hegel manifests his pantheism, which is "banal (*platt*) and rough (*grob*)" (HJL, XXXI, 1838, II, pp. 835, 841, and 851), depends on his "logical idealism" and is hostile to those systems – like that of Plato or, among the moderns, Leibniz and Schelling – which reveal "in their profundity of ideas the seed of an infinite development" (p. 846). A reader of Schelling's *Of Human Freedom* (1809), Sengler shows some sensitivity to transcendence and to the personality of God.

"When the Kantian limit of reason fell", writes Feuerbach, with reference to the historiographical works of the Kantians Reinhold, Fülleborn, Grohmann, and Tennemann, with whom he had begun his review, "and philosophy lost the character of limitedness it had necessarily taken because of its arbitrary boundaries, then, and only then, was it possible to open up a universal and free outlook in the field of philosophy itself" (*Sämtliche Werke*, II, p. 2). Now, this task has been fulfilled by

¹⁶ F. Sengler, Review of *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* (III. Band, Berlin, 1836), HJL, XXXI (1838), II. Hälfte, pp. 833–853; L. Feuerbach, Review of Hegels *Geschichte der Philosophie* (I. und II. Band, 1833), *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik* (Berlin, 1835), now in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by W. Bolin and F. Jodl (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1959), vol. II, pp. 1–17; Zeller, pp. 1–85 (51–52).

Hegel. "The concept of history in general is identical to that of the fundamental idea of his philosophy [...], because according to him the idea of philosophy has to be determined within itself, as the idea of an encyclopaedia of specific differences, and it constitutes a structure that develops its essence through composite and different systems [...]. It contains within itself the principle of a development and a particularisation which are independent and free; its fundamental proposition is not 'I live and let live', but rather 'I live letting others live'" (p. 3). Further on he writes: "No historian of philosophy has ever shown that characteristic intimacy which Hegel used to deal with the philosophers of the past, [...]. He is at home with foreign thinkers: he is familiar with Parmenides and Heraclitus, with Plato and Aristotle, as he is with himself". And, echoing Hegel himself, he observes: "The air of the Greek sky is the air of home to him, and this air blows from these lessons in our direction, refreshing and invigorating us" (p. 4).

Feuerbach's words betray a shade of irony; indeed, without declaring it explicitly, they transform the unifying synthesis through the rigour of the negations and overcomings into a sort of jolly all-togetherness, which is more similar to eclecticism than dialectic. Living by letting others live. In any case, besides this ironic tone, Feuerbach interprets Hegel's great historical design as a demand for freedom, but also as a demand for personal participation in history by Hegel himself, which is more like Feuerbach's humanism than Hegel's idealism. "His history is therefore undisputedly the first history that constitutes – and provides – a real knowledge of the history of philosophy, revealing the true meaning and underlying concept of the different systems. Indeed, we really know a thing only when we appropriate it (*wir sie uns aneignen*), that is, when we consider it and treat it as an event (*Angelegenheit*) of ours and we find its source in ourselves" (p. 4).

E. Zeller also expressed a positive verdict on Hegel's work and the "new speculative historians", who in his view represent the conclusion to problems which had been opened, but not resolved, by the erudite diligence of the Kantians (Tiedemann, Buhle, and Tennemann, but also Fries) and which continued in the brilliant but insufficient organicism of the Schellingians and the followers of Schleiermacher. Only philosophy – in particular Hegel's philosophy – can provide a "guiding idea that runs through history" and "reproduces conceptually and systematically the path followed by the thinking spirit in its development" (Zeller, p. 51). Zeller identifies the fundamental reason underlying this idea (*Grundidee*) as the coincidence between the sequence of "the systems of philosophy in history" and the sequence present "in the logical deduction of the conceptual determinations of the idea". Here Zeller quotes the expressions used by Hegel word for word. But he immediately contests their validity by bringing forward a primary objection: "This corresponds to misjudging (*Verkennung*) the specific character of history; the result is a mixture of logical and historical elements from which Hegel, here and in other places, was unable to keep himself free" (p. 52). He then gives some examples which show how, on the contrary, there are cases in which Hegel himself is forced to implicitly violate his own rule, starting with the very first philosophical system, that of the Ionian school, whose principle certainly does not reflect the first categories of the logical order.

For Zeller, it is therefore possible to embrace a guiding idea that gives the historical development a systematic unity, although this idea might not coincide exactly with the logical system of the categories.¹⁷ Here we can see in a young Zeller the possibility of freedom and historical contingency which in Hegel's historiography would be sacrificed by the arbitrary coincidence of historical and logical elements. And here too – in Zeller and the young Feuerbach and in the Schellingian Sengler – we can perceive a demand for freedom in the historical course of human thought, a defence of the “specific character” of history which is threatened by panlogism. This amounts to a positive appraisal of Hegel's work, although it entails a discussion and a revision of a central point of his methodology and even of his fundamental conception of the philosophical “spirit”. In concluding his 1843 text, Zeller announced the publication of his great work on the *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, whose first part, dealing with preliminary general questions and pre-Socratic philosophy, “is now being printed” (p. 85). The volume was to come out in 1844; from then on, the fortune of Hegel's work had one of its most fruitful periods, in an active continuity with his positions, not dogmatically and univocally accepted, but open to debate and to the rich succession of historical events.

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1.1.7.1 On General Questions Regarding Hegel's Philosophical Historiography

After 1972: Braun, pp. 327–348; W.Chr. Zimmerli, ‘Geschichtsphilosophie und Philosophiegeschichte im Denken des jungen Hegel. Ansätze zu einer Theorie der Philosophiegeschichte’, in *Natur und Geschichte*, ed. by K. Hubner and A. Menne (Hamburg, 1973), pp. 470–479; V. Verra, ‘Metodo dialettico, sistema speculativo e sviluppo storico della filosofia’, in *L'opera e l'eredità di Hegel*, ed. by G. Calabrò (Bari, 1974), pp. 107–120; M.J. Tschelidse, ‘Die Dialektik in Hegels Philosophiegeschichte’, *Hegel-Jahrbuch*, XV (1975), pp. 285–290; F.L. Peligero Escudero, ‘El concepto hegeliano de “historia de la filosofía”’, *Anales del Seminario*

¹⁷ On this point, see M. Isnardi Parente, ‘Eduard Zeller storico della filosofia antica’, in *Seminario su Eduard Zeller*, ed. by C. Cesa, *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, s. III, XIX, 3 (1989), p. 1094; regarding historical ‘continuity’ and the ‘system’ see also C. Cesa, ‘Eduard Zeller e la storia della filosofia moderna’, *ibid.*, p. 1070, where it is observed that “systematic” thinking can and has to be preserved as a philosophical constant even if there is a ‘fracture’ with regard to the contents of the system itself.

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Part II
**The Historiography of Philosophy in the
French, Italian, and Anglo-Saxon Areas**

Chapter 4

The History of Philosophy as a “Nomenclature of Systems”:

Joseph-Marie Degérando



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Introduction

(a) *Idéologues and spiritualists facing the philosophies of the past*

In the field of the historiography of philosophy, the French eighteenth century had closed emblematically with two works strongly influenced by revolutionary ferment – Naigeon’s *Philosophie ancienne et moderne* and Condorcet’s *Esquisse* (see *Models*, III, pp. 33–42 and 164–185). Just as emblematically, the nineteenth century opened during the transition from the Consulate to the Empire with Joseph-Marie Degérando’s vast historiographical work, which embodied the need for cultural reconciliation after the lacerating contrasts of the previous decade. This need manifested itself on several planes. On a theoretical plane, it translated into a revival of Condillac’s positions, which were modified, however, by the emphasis placed on “attention” understood as an act of the mind transforming sensation into perception (which results in a relationship of kinship-distance with the *Idéologues* and a proximity to the positions which were to be developed by spiritualists such as Laromiguière, Royer-Collard, and Maine de Biran). On a political and ethical plane, this corresponded to the need to recover the values of the Christian tradition and reconcile them with the post-revolutionary regimes. From the more specific point of view of the history of philosophy, Degérando finally represented the vigorous entry of Germany into the French tradition, giving rise to the re-establishment of the “general” history of philosophy on systematic bases and to the consequent fading of that *histoire de l’esprit humain* which had greatly characterized the age of the *lumières*. However, the intent to classify which inspired Degérando and which aimed at translating the history of philosophy into a strict “nomenclature of

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systems”, had its theoretical justification not so much in Kant’s critical philosophy (as was the case in Germany with Buhle and Tennemann) as in a “philosophy of experience” fuelled by the teachings of the Scottish school, which were relatively widespread in continental Europe.

The *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie* acquires even greater prominence if we consider that it was closely interconnected with Degérando’s theoretical positions, of which it constituted something more than a mere introduction or a “precipitate” in the field of the history of philosophy; indeed, it differed from the limited interest in a historical approach to philosophy manifested both by the *Idéologues* and by Maine de Biran. In the several volumes of the *Éléments d’idéologie* (Paris, 1801–1815, vols 6; repr. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1977, vols 3; in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. by Cl. Jolly, vols III–VI, Paris, 2012–2015) by Antoine-Louis-Claude Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836), the references to the philosophical past are absolutely marginal. However, a few stimulating – albeit not new – suggestions appear, for example, in the introduction to the “General Grammar”, in which the two “epochs of light” in human history (the Graeco-Roman epoch and the “three or four last centuries”) are contrasted with the other epochs, during which the “darkness of ignorance” prevailed. The intellectual evolution of the “two good epochs” was similar: just as the ancients started with artistic and literary masterpieces, then devoted themselves to physics and mathematics and then to moral philosophy, up to the “age of sophists, grammarians, and critics”, so in recent times the moderns gradually started to deal with “reasoned grammar and metaphysical analysis”. But the parallel is soon replaced by a comparison, in which the ancients are obviously defeated: “extremely keen by nature and intelligence” but lacking previous experiences and the appropriate tools, the ancients “had given in to their natural impatience and had tried to divine nature rather than to know it”, thus coming to erect “one thousand systems on the nature of their intelligence before having even examined the operations performed by it”. Hippocrates and Aristotle were certainly “extraordinary observers”, but the Greeks involuntarily neglected “the art of experiences” – and, as Tracy makes clear in a footnote, Aristotle’s logic was founded on erroneous bases, thus exerting “an incredible and disastrous influence” (*Éléments d’idéologie*, repr. 1977, II, pp. 1–4).

Coming to more recent times, it is once again the criterion of analogy which is applied to this schematic reconstruction of the history of the *esprit humain*, finalized for the advent of Condillac’s analytic method: “What had been caused by impatience and rashness among the Greeks, was about to be brought about in us by the dominance of religious opinions. But fortunately, some men endowed with a superior intelligence imparted a good direction on our minds, which, once applied to all kinds of research, soon brought about the awareness that in order to discover the laws of discourse and rational thinking it was necessary to know our intelligence, and that before speaking of grammar and logic it was necessary to study our intellectual faculties. But in the meantime, the theologians of all sects were the only ones entitled to prescribe what we had to think on this point, and nobody dared to penetrate into their supremacy” (II, pp. 4–7).

These historical and critical observations are taken up again in part III of the *Éléments d'Idéologie*, which is devoted to logic. Medieval philosophers are here defined as "ignorant pupils of the Greeks", because they thought they could grasp truths from which we are excluded, such as the origin of the world, the nature of the first cause, or the essence of bodies and minds. Here we can point out an interesting note in which Tracy judges the metaphysics of the Greek philosophers (with its "groundless abstruse speculations") as incompatible with the political and social system of ancient Greece, "a nation which was alive, free, and open to communication", in which the exchange of ideas implied the practice of criticism and therefore inevitably involved laughing at absurd opinions. According to Tracy, therefore, "these speculations must have originated and gained substance in the minds of solitary people, who were accustomed to meditation; therefore they must have taken rise in a country where the study and culture of the sciences was the exclusive prerogative of a privileged caste secluded from society and at the same dominating it. They came from Asia and Egypt and gained some credit among the Greeks because of that high esteem always and everywhere accorded to the systems coming from afar. The metaphysics which is native (= original) to Greece [...] is clearly constituted by the theology of its poets; whereas the other one must have necessarily been introduced into it from outside. And this [...] is confirmed more and more every day thanks to the study of Oriental antiquities, as this study is increasingly developed". The analogy arises again with the aim of justifying the philosophical superiority of the children of France: "These are also the reasons why, among modern nations, the French were the first to reject this metaphysics, which, in order to be convincing, needs obscurity and authority" (III, pp. 143–145). Equally interesting is the following parallel between Bacon and Descartes: Tracy acknowledges their merit in having "reduced the Scholastics to silence", because, "by demonstrating that true science consists in the knowledge of facts, rather than in the knowledge of arguments, they directed attention to another area" (III, pp. 147–148). The fact that Descartes is placed under Bacon's empiricism seems astonishing at first, but Tracy later clarifies the significance of his judgement, which pivots around that notion of inner experience which, despite their opposite labels, united Condillac and Descartes and was to induce some writers to make *idéologie* evolve towards spiritualism: "Bacon said that everything consists in facts; they originate from one another; it is necessary to study facts. And Descartes found the first fact, from which all other facts derive. It is true that, after properly connecting the thread which was to guide him, Descartes suddenly broke it. Let us try now to tie it together again and follow it uninterruptedly from our first perception to the last. Indeed, logical science either consists in this or is nothing" (III, p. 190).

As Sergio Moravia clearly pointed out, in the *Idéologues* interest is mainly directed towards the creation of a *science de l'homme*, in which Condillac's original epistemological and methodological structure is applied to various fields (from the psychological and the linguistic to the anthropological and medical), whereas the historical dimension, when it is present, plays a merely supportive function, taking on the characteristics and pursuing the aims of the *histoire de l'esprit humain* cultivated during the eighteenth century. This is what happens, for example, in the

médecin-philosophe Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis (1757–1808), who, in his famous memoir concerning the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* (1798), devoted a paragraph to a “brief picture of the advancements of rational analysis”, which begins from the “earliest times of history”, that is to say, from the epoch of democracy in Greece (indeed, observes the author, “before that time we encounter nothing but absurd lies or allegorical tales”). Great admiration is shown for the “sort of prodigy” that was ancient Greece, which Cabanis considered to be an everlasting model of culture and civil life, the aim of which was to “improve human destiny and save peoples from oppression”. Among these “benefactors of mankind” the most outstanding were Pythagoras, Democritus, Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Epicurus; “but after some good days, which, strictly speaking, were nothing other than the dawn of philosophy, the Greeks fell into miserable subtleties. Aristotle, despite all his genius, contributed greatly to this; and even more so did Plato”, who finally allied himself with an “ignorant and obscure fanaticism”. A short and derogatory mention is made of the Middle Ages, and we come to Bacon, Descartes (whose “mistakes should not make us forget the immortal services he rendered to the sciences and to human reason”), Hobbes, Locke, Charles Bonnet (“a great naturalist and a great metaphysician”), Helvétius (“a wise, broad, and deep mind”), and Condillac, praised for his “bright reason and perfect method” (*Oeuvres philosophiques de Cabanis*, ed. by C. Lehec and J. Cazeneuve (Paris, 1956), I, pp. 128–142).

This *tableau*, which takes up the most characteristic themes of the *histoire de l'esprit humain* (in this regard, let us remember the close friendship between Cabanis and Condorcet), ends by pointing out “the quite remarkable relationship between the advancements of the philosophical and moral sciences and those of physiology, the physical science of man: but this relationship appears more visibly in the very nature of things”.¹ This is explained, in *Coup d'oeil sur les révolutions et la réforme de la médecine* (published in 1804 but written in the year III of the Revolution), with an extensive profile of the history of medicine, in which there are frequent encounters with the history of philosophy, with the object of creating a “philosophical medicine” based on the application of Condillac’s analytical method (*Oeuvres philosophiques*, II, pp. 83–147; but see also *Projet d'une bibliothèque universelle à l'Institut National* [1797], which reveals evident echoes of Condorcet’s *Esquisse*, as well as the *Lettre à M. F**** [Claude Fauriel] *sur les causes premières*, written around 1806–1807, which mentions among other things a history of Stoicism

¹ Cabanis, *Oeuvres philos.*, I, p. 142. On this subject let us also mention the II ed. (1806), “revised and considerably expanded”, of the *Nouveaux élémens de la science de l'homme*, written by the renowned physician-philosopher Paul-Joseph Barthez, who maintained the vitalistic theory which had long prevailed in the medical school of Montpellier. In re-establishing the “Physiology, or the Science of the human nature”, he also carried out an *excursus* into history, which aimed to show how “the opinion that considers the vital principle of man as the third part of human nature [hence distinct both from the body and from the soul] is accepted by most sects of philosophers and physicians” and did not originate with Van Helmont at all, as is generally believed (P.-J. Barthez, *Nouveaux élémens de la science de l'homme* (Paris, Goujon et Brunot, 1806 [I ed.: Montpellier 1778]), I, p. 67).

which Fauriel himself had planned to write: *ibid.*, II, pp. 257 and 505–511; on this planned *Histoire du Stoïcisme*, and on the *Lettre sur les causes premières*, cf. Picavet, pp. 273–277, 285, and 480–481).

We find a critical revision of Condillac’s sensualism above all in the successful *Leçons de philosophie* (Paris, 1815–1818) by Pierre Laromiguière (1756–1837), the fruit of his teaching at the Faculty of Letters which began in 1811. Although it was centered on an analysis of the “faculties of the soul”, this work contains references to the history of philosophy viewed in its entirety. In claiming that “attention” has an active function, Laromiguière devotes a whole lesson to the “Opinions of philosophers on the faculties of the soul”, judging the thought of the Greeks and the Scholastics negatively, and then lingering over a critical analysis of the positions held by Aristotle, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Bonnet, de Brosses, Vauvenargues, and Diderot (*Leçons de philosophie, ou Essai sur les facultés de l’âme*, par P. Laromiguière [...], Troisième édition, Paris, Brunot-Labbe, 1823, I, pp. 354–380). There is another historical review in vol. II (pp. 354–360) which regards the variety of opinions expressed by the philosophers concerning “general ideas” or “forms”; of particular significance is a reference to the history of philosophy which appears when the author asserts the principle that all our knowledge is preceded by feeling: speaking to his students, Laromiguière observes that “the feeling of relationship, which always precedes the perception of a relationship, but which does not always give rise to a perception, will make you suspect that there are few ideas which all men do not carry the seed of in their feelings; and you will be less surprised when, reading the history of philosophy, you will see Socrates teach that all knowledge acquired during one’s life is reminiscence. Since he had already heard what he was learning, he thought that he was learning nothing new” (II, p. 132).

An interest in the history of philosophy was, strictly speaking, foreign to François-Pierre Maine de Biran (1766–1824), even though he did write several ‘commentaries’ and ‘notes’ on the greatest contemporary modern thinkers (Descartes, Pascal, Malebranche, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, Condillac, Rousseau, Reid, Stewart, Kant, Destutt de Tracy, Laromiguière...). As Chr. Frémont has observed, however, it would be fruitless to look in them for “a lesson on the history of philosophy, [...] because the philosopher-reader constantly comments on his authors in the light of his own doctrine and from the point of view of his ‘conversion’ of 1812–1813, which steered him towards the notion of absolute” (Maine de Biran, *Oeuvres*, XI/I. *Commentaires et marginalia: Dix-septième siècle*, ed. by Chr. Frémont (Paris, 1990), p. vii). Maine de Biran certainly took the *Histoire comparée* into consideration and cited it in particular in an article on Leibniz he wrote for Michaud’s extensive biographical collection, in which Degérando is defined as “a reliable historian” (p. 137; see also, on p. 231, a reference to the main ‘general’ histories, in which he states that Leibniz “has been properly explained not only by the authors of general histories of philosophy, such as Brucker, Tiedemann, Buhle, but also by the metaphysicians”). Indeed, Maine de Biran even devoted a long ‘Note’ to the *Histoire comparée*, the contents of which were theoretical and not historiographical, however. Using Degérando as a source on Fichte, he began with

a quotation on the identity between “existence and science in the self, which is the source of all light” (cf. *Hist. comp.*¹, II, p. 298), then observed that “this principle is included in mine: the feeling of our existence and objective knowledge, that is, science, rest on the same foundation”; it is followed by an essentially philosophical discussion (*Oeuvres*, XI/3. *Commentaires et marginalia: Dix-neuvième siècle*, ed. by J. Ganault (Paris, 1990), p. 103).

(b) *The polemic against the Lumières and the return to tradition*

During the Napoleonic age, some writers used the form of the historical discussion to denounce the errors made by both the ancient and the modern philosophers, with an apologetic religious intent. This was the case of the legitimist Pierre-Victor-Jean Berthre de Bourniseaux, the author of a *Précis historique de la guerre civile de la Vendée* (1802), who took the works of the *grand siècle* and combined Plutarch's scheme of parallel lives with the classical theme of the ‘comparison’ between the doctrines of the ancients and the moderns: *Le charlatanisme philosophique de tous les âges dévoilé, ou Histoire critique des plus célèbres philosophes, avec la comparaison des Anciens et des Modernes*, par P.V.J. Berthre de Bourniseaux, (de Thouars), de la Société libre des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Paris, etc. etc. (Paris, chez Migneret, 1807), vols 2, pp. 405 and 251. The theme of the *comparaison* with an apologetic intent had been already extensively exploited twenty years earlier by the abbé Pelvert (cf. *Models*, III, pp. 233–234) and had reappeared in some chapters of Chateaubriand's *Essai sur les révolutions* (1797),² but the value of this new work is decidedly inferior. In the ‘Préface’, Bourniseaux shows a negative prejudice against all philosophers, who are accused of being self-righteous and conceited and of thinking they can “explain without observing”, and he categorically denies that the development of philosophical studies has produced any important discoveries in the sciences and the arts or increased the purity of morals the Christian religion (*Le charlatanisme philosophique*, I, pp. 1–27). He then expands on each of the following pairs of philosophers describing their lives and doctrines, pointing out their defects and mistakes, and finally drawing a brief *comparaison*: Pythagoras and Diderot, Anaxagoras and La Mettrie, Crysippus and Girolamo Cardano, Pyrrho and Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger, and Epicurus and Rousseau. Let us take just one

²Cf. in particular, in chapter xxiv of part I, the ‘Parallèle de J.-J. Rousseau et d'Héraclite’ (which points out the similarities between the two thinkers) and the comparison between the Greek philosophers and modern *philosophes* with respect to politics and morals, where emphasis is placed on a long series of *dissonances* (F.-R. de Chateaubriand, *Essai sur les révolutions. Génie du christianisme*, ed. by M. Regard (Paris, 1978), pp. 120–29). But see also Fréron's review of the French translation of the *Saggio istorico critico sulla vanità e insufficienza dell'antica filosofia pagana paragonata colle massime, e co' precetti della morale cristiana* by the Florentine Gaetano Sertor: “In a word, just try to change the names: reading the thought of the ancients you will think you have before your eyes the thought of all our modern sages. It would be easy for me to show how the two schools are similar to each other”; so we find, for example, a parallel between Heraclitus and Voltaire with reference to fire considered as the soul of the world (*L'Année littéraire*, IV (1783), p. 159). On Sertor, see *Models*, III, p. 247 and, more extensively, I. Tolomio, *I fasti della ragione. Itinerari della storiografia filosofica nell'illuminismo italiano* (Padua, 1990), pp. 29–37.

example of this mediocre apologetic and polemical historiography: the comparison between Epicurus and Rousseau, two philosophers who, according to Bourniseaux, “appear ill-assorted” at first sight but, once they are “examined more carefully”, show several similarities both in their biographical vicissitudes and their intellectual attitudes. But there are evident dissimilarities as well: Epicurus, who had an amiable nature, considered the soul to be mortal and gave rise to a “great number of libertines and atheists”, but he took good care not to dispute the social and political institutions of Athens, constantly keeping the favour of his fellow townsmen; the misanthrope Rousseau, who considered the soul to be immortal, did not hesitate in threatening “the foundations of society, religion, and morals” with his philosophical theories, and “was taken as a code of conduct by all the revolutionary murderers of the eighteenth century”, finally dying in complete solitude... (II, pp. 227–232).

Indeed, the whole historiographical apparatus serves to point out the connection between the *philosophes* and the Jacobin Terror – which was the *Leitmotiv* of the counter revolutionaries – and to convince the “French youth” of the “advantages of a Christian life”. In this way, Diderot becomes “a forerunner of the Jacobins” and Rousseau someone who was animated by “the hidden intention to raise the poor against the rich”. The confutation of Boulanger’s criticisms of the Christian religion allows Bourniseaux to demonstrate with history that “political and philosophical fanaticism shed a thousand times more blood than religious fanaticism” and that it is unjust to blame the Christian religion for “the folly of the Crusades and the cruelties committed by the Spaniards in America” (I, pp. 113–114 and 388–402; II, pp. 164–165 and 214–215). *Le charlatanisme philosophique* was extensively reviewed in *Mélanges de philosophie, d’histoire, de morale et de littérature*, a Catholic journal founded in 1806, suppressed in 1811 together with other 39 periodicals, and published again from 1814, after the fall of Napoleon, under the significant title *L’Ami de la Religion et du Roi*. While expressing doubts over the validity of the parallels between the ancients and the moderns, the reviewer appreciates the essential meaning of the work and stresses the “inexhaustible mine” of eighteenth-century philosophy, whose followers must be unmasked and denounced because of the “disastrous outcomes” of their teachings. Within this context, let us mention the distinction between *histoire des philosophes* and *histoire de la philosophie*, which seems to echo the distinction between *historia personarum* and *historia doctrinarum* once theorized by Brucker.³

Another example of a work which uses the history of thought with anti-Enlightenment intentions is the two-tome *De l’usage et de l’abus de l’esprit philosophique durant le dix-huitième siècle* (Paris, A. Égron, 1820), pp. 39–cxxxii–356;

³ MPhHML, 2, 1807, pp. 498–518, in particular p. 499: “At times we will be advised to write the *history of philosophers*, follow the story of their actions, disclose their defects, vices, vanity, and hypocrisy, and to show how their behaviour negates their doctrines. [...] Whereas at other times we will be advised to write the *history of philosophy itself*, its advancements, the attacks it launches either in a veiled way or, in most cases, overtly and blatantly, its wicked dissimulation and unpunished boldness, and finally all the manoeuvring and intriguing which led to the recent catastrophe” [italics ours]. On this distinction in Brucker, cf. *Models*, II, pp. 487–488.

xxxii-513, written by Jean-Étienne-Marie Portalis, a work this time of a considerably higher level. Imprisoned by Robespierre, obliged to emigrate to Switzerland and Holstein from 1797 to 1799, subsequently appointed minister of religion during the Consulate and the Empire, a member of the *Académie française* and the commission which drew up the Napoleonic code, the viscount of Portalis died in 1807. His work on the *esprit philosophique*, which appeared posthumously in mid Restoration, had been written during his exile and was republished in 1827 and 1834. It opens with an *Essai sur l'origine, l'histoire et les progrès de la littérature française et de la philosophie, pouvant servir d'Introduction à l'ouvrage, par l'Éditeur* (I, pp. xvii-cxxii), in which the editor outlines a "history of the philosophical spirit" from Graeco-Roman Antiquity (pp. lxxxiv ff.) which serves as a key to interpreting a work which, owing to its prolixity and the numerous themes treated, risks bewildering the ordinary reader. Originating in Greece, augmented by the Church Fathers, and subsequently contested by Scholasticism, the *esprit philosophique* arose again with the "revolution of the fifteenth century" and reached its climax in France between the end of the seventeenth and the very beginning of the eighteenth century, thus attaining the "golden mean" between "darkness" and "dazzling brilliance". But because of the increasing corruption of morals, this spirit was subjected to the "empire of the senses" and gave rise to an "irreligious philosophy", in such a way that "the Frenchman, who is born shrewd and rebellious (*malin et frondeur*), started to laugh without stopping to believe; he then stopped believing and continued to laugh", propagating therefore a "false philosophical spirit" (I, pp. cxv-cxxi).

Portalis' treatment consists of 34 chapters, the first of which is devoted to the "philosophical spirit in general". This spirit is described as a one "of freedom, research, and light, whose desire is to see everything and to presume nothing"; "it is to the intellect what conscience is to the heart"; it has no specific object of its own, but it is applied to all fields, and "it lies above philosophy itself, just as the geometric spirit lies above geometry" (I, pp. 2-3; cf. Picavet, p. 500, where it is observed that this definition continues to bear the mark of Enlightenment). There follows a long analysis of modern thought and some fundamental philosophical and political concepts (the state of nature, the social contract, sovereignty, freedom, equality, etc.). Let us mention chapters vii and viii in particular, which examine the *Critique of Pure Reason* in Born's Latin translation (1797) and the *Philosophiae criticae secundum Kantium expositio systematica* by Konrad Friedrich von Schmidt-Phiseldeck, the first volume of which had appeared in Copenhagen in 1796. Referring to the empiricist tradition, Portalis declares that "sound metaphysics only admits of two types of ideas, simple ones, which are also termed 'direct' or 'sensible', and complex ones"; he then accuses Kant of "turning the foundations of human certainty upside down" and praises all those who had criticized Kant and resisted his seductions: "Not all reasonable men have yielded to the yoke of the innovators in philosophy. The writings of Jacobi, Bardili, Herder, and a multitude of admirable philosophers prove that the true philosophical spirit has penetrated among the Germans, just as it did in France and England" (I, pp. 112, 129 and 146). Portalis's work represents an anti-Enlightenment model of the *histoire de l'esprit humain*

typical of the Enlightenment, and it was mentioned in passing by Gueroult, because, despite its gross mistakes, it “tries to subordinate historical and anecdotic interest to the philosophical interest strictly speaking” (Gueroult, p. 707).

We must now turn to one of the works of the great French Catholic apologetics, the *Génie du Christianisme* (1802) by François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848), which contains a number of chapters explicitly devoted to the influence exerted by the Christian religion on the “progress of philosophical ideas”. This work presents not so much a systematic historical reconstruction (similar to that outlined in the *Essai sur les révolutions*, written a couple of years before Chateaubriand’s return to the Catholic faith)⁴ as a series of penetrating *réflexions* which sometimes take the character of veritable *maximes* formulated against the background of the constitutive ambivalence of philosophy. “True philosophy”, as opposed to the “sophistic mortuary (*morgue sophistique*)”, corresponds to “the innocence of the old age of peoples, when they stop having virtues on the basis of instinct and only have them by reason: this second innocence is not as sure as the first, but, when it can be attained, it is more sublime” (Chateaubriand, *Essai sur les révolutions. Génie du Christianisme*, p. 803). Defending the Church from the accusations of having hindered the exercise of philosophy over the course of history, Chateaubriand quotes the passages in which Plato, Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and Newton himself denounced the uncertainty and the danger of the sciences and, faced with the variety of contrasting opinions of the philosophers and scientists, he observes: “What a huge number of reflections on this history of the ‘tree of the sciences, which produces death’! The centuries of philosophy always led to centuries of destruction” (p. 817). This polemical attack on the *siècle des lumières* (the “philosophical century” *par excellence*, which was to be strongly criticized, among others, by Joseph de Maistre

⁴In the chapters XXII–XXV of part II of his *Essai*, Chateaubriand outlines a general history of philosophy: starting from the two great schools, the Ionian and the Italic (for which he provides a graphic framework), he mentions the essential features of the five main sects founded by Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, and Pyrrho. After mentioning the medieval age in highly critical terms, he turns to the revival of letters and the subsequent rebirth of the ancient philosophical schools, until Bruno, Cardano, and Bacon “opened up a new route” and Bacon in particular showed posterity “the true path of philosophy”. This is followed by a brief survey of the main philosophers of the seventeenth century (Descartes is considered to be he who “caused Pyrrhonism to revive and opened up the sources which produced the flood of modern philosophy”), then moving on to the *encyclopédistes*, who were accused of atheism, practicing a destructive form of criticism, theoretical insubstantiality, and immorality (Chateaubriand, *Essai sur les révolutions. Génie du christianisme*, pp. 342–60). The purpose of this “complete little history of philosophy and the philosophers” (p. 360) is not so much to show the truth or falsehood of the different systems as “the influence exerted on the happiness of the peoples they were taught to”: since both ancient and modern philosophers were opposed to moral, political, and religious institutions, they ended up by “overthrowing the laws and opinions of their country”, a process which took place much more rapidly in France than in Greece. From a moral point of view, the modern *philosophes* avoided some of the oddities which had characterized the ancient philosophers, but they were much more degenerate (pp. 369–373).

in his *Soirées de Saint-Petersbourg* published in 1821)⁵ is formulated by means of a comparison with the other authentic “philosophical century”, the seventeenth, the superiority of which is claimed here, following a tendency also present in other Catholic apologists of the early nineteenth century.⁶

The *comparaison* finally includes ancient thought, thus expanding the historical perspective: “It is rather surprising that our century held itself to be superior, as regards metaphysics [i.e. gnoseology] and dialectic, to the century that preceded it. Facts are evidence against us: certainly Condillac, who said nothing new, cannot alone counterbalance Locke, Descartes, Malebranche, and Leibniz. He does nothing but dismember the first, and he gets lost whenever he goes forward without him. However, today’s metaphysics differs from that practised in Antiquity, in separating imagination from abstract perceptions as far as possible”. But this separation between human faculties, which is the result of the analytical method, prevents us from grasping the connections between facts, and “we fall back into confusion,

⁵In the second *entretien*, de Maistre cites a long series of philosophers – from Pythagoras to Leibniz and Malebranche – who objected to the theory of the sensible origin of ideas, and he criticizes the empiricists (“With his rough system, Locke sparked off materialism. Condillac made this system *à la mode dans le pays à la mode* thanks to its supposed clarity, which is basically the mere simplicity of nothingness”). He denounces the exploitation during the previous century by the “great cabbala”, that is, the *secte philosophique*, which recruited some thinkers who were actually foreign to materialism (just as Cabanis did with Hippocrates and Aristotle). As regards the famous principle of the Scholastics, *nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu*, he refers to Aquinas’ text in order to dispute the current interpretation from a sensistic point of view (*Oeuvres complètes de J. de Maistre* (Lyon, 1884–1886, repr. Genève, 1979), IV, pp. 108–119: 110). Further on, in the fifth *entretien*, the philosophy of the eighteenth century is defined as “one of the most shameful epochs of the *esprit humain*” because of its deliberate intention to “separate man from God” and diffuse the *théophobie* (p. 282).

⁶This is the case of Jacques-André Émery, Father Superior General of the *Compagnie de Saint Sulpice*, who saw the revival of Catholicism as a return to the spirit of the seventeenth century, when the philosophical as well as Christian genius had attained its highest expression. This was the idea inspiring his anthologies which contained texts by four major representatives of modern thought: *Esprit de Leibnitz, ou Recueil de pensées choisies sur la religion, la morale, l’histoire et la philosophie* (Paris, 1772; 3rd ed., 1803), 2 vols (a work which Degérando considered to be relatively helpful, although insufficient as concerns “la liaison, la suite et la génération, qui unissent toutes les idées de ce philosophe”: *Hist. comp.*¹, II, p. 78 n.); *Le christianisme de F. Bacon, ou Pensées et sentiments de ce grand homme sur la religion* (Paris, 1799), 2 vols; *Défense de la révélation contre les objections des esprits-forts, par M. Euler, suivie des Pensées sur la religion* (Paris, 1805; 2nd ed., 1825); *Pensées de Descartes sur la religion et la morale* (Paris, 1811; Tours, 1870). The attempt to reverse the image cherished by the *philosophes* of Bacon as a scientist and unbeliever was to be vigorously opposed by Joseph de Maistre in his *Examen de la philosophie de Bacon*, which he finished in 1815 but appeared posthumously in 1836. A systematic demolition of Bacon’s fame and innovative assertions on Aristotle is here accompanied by an overall judgement on modern philosophy, which is criticized for having erroneously separated science from religion (*Oeuvres complètes de J. de Maistre*, VI, p. 451; but see on pp. 9–10 the criticism aimed at Kant: “Si Kant, par exemple, avait marché en simplicité de cœur à la suite de Platon, de Descartes, de Malebranche, etc., il ne serait déjà plus question de Locke dans le monde, et la France peut-être serait *désinfatuée* de son ridicule et funeste Condillac. Au lieu de cela, il a plu à Kant de se livrer à cet orgueil aigre et exclusif qui refuse de devoir rien à personne. Il nous a parlé comme une Pythonisse énigmatique”).

because of the application of a method, and the large amount of particular conclusions prevents us from reaching a general conclusion" (p. 819).

What is the use – asks Chateaubriand insistently – of distinguishing between conscience, attention, and memory, if (as happened with the *Idéologues*) all connection with the ethical, religious dimension is lacking? "Something is good and positive because it involves a moral intention; now, all metaphysics which is not theology, like that of the ancients and the Christians, all metaphysics which creates a huge gap between man and God [...], a metaphysics of this kind is ineffective and dangerous, because it is purposeless". It is necessary to link metaphysics back to moral objectives, according to the model of Plato's "science of the gods" and Pythagoras' "divine geometry" (p. 820). Further on, objecting to the Enlightenment idea of progress, Chateaubriand observes that the alleged superiority of the eighteenth century compared to the *grand siècle* "can be reduced to advances in the field of natural studies, advances which belong to the progression of time and certainly do not compensate for the ensuing loss of imagination. Thought is the same in every century but it is accompanied more particularly either by the arts or by the sciences; it is only together with the former [the arts] that it attains all its poetical greatness and moral beauty" (p. 828, where he also appreciates the moderation of authors like Pascal, Bossuet, and Fénelon, who "were able to see farther than us because, knowing the nature of things like us, or better than us, they perceived the danger of innovation").

This is not simply revenge against the *Lumières*, as in the case of Bourniseaux: apart from the ideological conflict, this new interpretation which is generally critical of the intellectual evolution of the modern age, manifests dissatisfaction and unease (which can also be observed in a more attenuated fashion in Degérando) with respect to Condillac's analytic method, which the *Idéologues* rigorously extended to the *science de l'homme*. But this method, remarks Chateaubriand, "is nothing but a microscope, which surprisingly makes us discover some small objects which our sight would not be able to seize, but which can either be ignored or known, without thereby creating or filling in a void in existence (*un vide dans l'existence*)" (p. 820). Despite its success on a scientific plane, the crisis of the *Idéologie* is clearly diagnosed here, paving the way for the spiritualism of Laromiguière, Royer-Collard, and Maine de Biran, and the eclecticism of Cousin, profoundly reconsidering the relationship between philosophy and its history.

Chateaubriand's mistrust of philosophy is transformed into a radical, total criticism in another exponent of Catholic traditionalism, Louis-Gabriel Ambroise de Bonald (1754–1840), whose *Recherches philosophiques sur les premiers objets des connaissances morales* (Paris, 1818) opens by presenting the catalogue of the failures of philosophy, as demonstrated by its history: "After almost three thousand years during which, with the aid of the lights of reason, men have searched for the principle of their knowledge, the rule which guides their judgement, and the foundation of their duties; after they have searched, in a word, for *science* and *wisdom*, there continue to exist for these big subjects as many systems as there are scholars, and as much uncertainty as there are systems". After a quotation from Ancillon, which might equally have been pronounced by Hegel ("At first sight, the history of

philosophy offers nothing other than utter chaos”), Bonald goes on by observing that “century after century, the difference in doctrines has been increasing together with the number of masters and the progress made by knowledge; and Europe, with its libraries full of philosophical writings, where there are almost as many philosophers as there are writers, is poor amid such vast riches and, led by so many guides, is uncertain of its route; Europe, centre and hearth (*foyer*) of all the lights of the world, is still waiting for a *philosophy*” (*Oeuvres complètes de M. de Bonald* [...] (Paris, J.-P. Migne, 1859), III, cols 1–2).

To support his theory, Bonald outlines an interesting *excursus* into the history of philosophy, using as his main source Degérando’s *Histoire comparée*, even though he does not share its fundamental idea, that, despite the futility of the efforts made hitherto, one day, with an appropriate method, the philosophers will be able to discover “the principle of human knowledge and the true system of philosophy”. Nor does Bonald show any inclination for the eclectic position, the “party of the moderates in philosophy”, which aims to create an “average system” taking what is “weak” in the different opinions and leaving aside all that is “strong and absolute”; he has a totally negative view of ancient eclecticism, thus anticipating the criticisms which were later to be aimed at Cousin.⁷

The *excursus* (which, together with some “general observations on ancient and modern philosophical doctrines” occupies the cols 3–31, and goes up to Kant, who is judged rather negatively)⁸ starts significantly with the ancient people of Israel,

⁷ *Oeuvres complètes de M. de Bonald*, III, col. II: “Each system is produced in a single go: it constitutes a body and a set of truths or errors connected to one another in the mind of he who conceived them; it is not possible to make a system using others systems, as one writes a history using other histories, and the eclectics completed the destruction of ancient opinions without laying down new opinions capable of enjoying some credit among the *esprits*”. Here Bonald is not aiming at the ancient eclectics but rather the modern ones, and, after mentioning the rebirth of the ancient philosophical schools during the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, he remarks ironically that “nowadays we become eclectics in order to be something” (col. 16).

⁸ *Ibid.*, cols 21–23: the claim to carry out a *révolution totale* in philosophy meant that in Germany Kant was “proclaimed the oracle of reason, the interpreter of nature, the Messiah promised to philosophy: after Luther such fanaticism had never been seen, and it was certainly a good thing that, in order to tranquillize the people, this doctrine, which appeared too late, did not find anything in society that could be left to the passions of man but addressed itself only to his mind. When people started to become tired of admiring this new system, they began to study it, but they were immediately prevented by the difficulty of understanding it. [...] The prodigious variety of details, the novelty of the definitions, the eccentricity of the terms, the intricacy of the results, all things which enjoy success among the Germans, who show greater simplicity in character than in ideas (*toutes choses qui sont un succès chez les Allemands, lesquels ont plus de simplicité dans le caractère que dans les idées*), made the most enthusiastic and devout follower stumble at each step. [...] In the end, by dint of commentaries, some *bons esprits* began to suspect that this impenetrable obscurity might mask an emptiness of ideas or conceal their profundity. So they started to shed some light and soon discovered the weak aspects of the system”. Hence the various attempts, repudiated by Kant himself, to correct and reformulate his system. In conclusion, “the critical philosophy of this philosopher, which had been announced with emphasis, welcomed with fanaticism, and debated furiously, after it finished off Leibniz and Wolff’s doctrines, could not rest firmly on its bases, and finally resulted in nothing but divisions or even hatred and a general distaste for every doctrine: frankly we can say that it killed philosophy, and perhaps any other new system has now become impossible”.

who never knew the word ‘philosopher’ and whose concern was to seek the “principle of moral knowledge, the foundation of power, the rule of duties, the model (*type*), in a word, all social truths” in revealed Scripture rather than in the “vain opinions of men”. This, however, did not prevent the Hebrews from taking part in the study of nature and the arts and technologies, as is shown by the figure of king Solomon, a learned naturalist, the construction of the Temple, and the circumnavigation of Africa. Bonald then moves on to a relatively widespread theory in seventeenth-century historiography, which derived from the Platonic Christian tradition: “Wherever this primitive knowledge of moral truths was not fixed in the Scripture, it soon started to change, both owing to the human passions and to the remoteness of times and dispersal of peoples; but it could never be totally erased. The great idea of the first cause and the origin of things never disappeared from society, and humanity remained forever anguished due to the desire, or rather the need, to know this principle of all truth, which is the primary object of all philosophy” (cols 4–5; regarding the central question of the existence of the first cause, for which the philosophers have never been able to offer a solution free from criticisms and controversies, see col. 27–28).

Although the general context is dominated by the inadequacy of all systems, Bonald’s fondness for Platonism is revealed by the considerations which close the *excursus*: the central question concerning the origin of our ideas has produced two fundamental systems, the Platonic and the Aristotelian, which correspond to the two substances (intelligence and matter) which make up the universe, and the two faculties of man (reason and sense). All other systems can be brought back to these two, unless we accept a pantheistic confusion of spirit and matter. The theory of innate ideas has been adopted by “the most brilliant geniuses who bring honour to philosophy and letters” (Plato, Augustine, Descartes, Malebranche, Bossuet, Fénelon, and Leibniz); Platonism is “primarily religious” (whereas “the opposite system is naturally allied with materialism”) and is therefore “more favourable to moral things, just as Peripateticism is to physical things”; it is preferred by “superior minds” because it is “more absolute and simple” and does not linger over doubt, which is typical of “mediocre minds” (cols 23–25).

But in contemporary European philosophy (that is to say France, England, and Germany), Bonald cannot distinguish either a true philosophy or a doctrine on which the philosophers agree: just as in the age of Plato and Aristotle, we still wonder what “science” and what “knowledge” is; besides, the “three great reformers” who marked the transition to modern thought (Bacon, Descartes, and Leibniz) actually engendered deep divisions between the minds; hence philosophy “reforms itself unceasingly”, but it “never takes form” (col. 16; the expression “*trois grands réformateurs*” is taken from Degérando, but Bonald uses it critically and is an interesting precursor of Jacques Maritain’s anti-modern polemic against the “three reformers” Luther, Descartes, and Rousseau). It is precisely due to the lack, or rather the impossibility, of a philosophical system accepted by everyone (only the authority of revelation, according to Bonald, guarantees undisputed and universal truth) that “today the history of philosophy constitutes a special course as well as an interesting part of philosophical education [he refers here to French university

institutions], because this history, just like the history of states, is nothing but a history of wars and revolutions; and if there had been only one philosophy in the world, we could have the lives of philosophers but no history of philosophy" (col. 31). The irremediable plurality of philosophers is therefore the very condition for the existence of a "history of philosophy".

Another author who appears to be in line with Bonald's "anti-philosophy" is Félicité-Robert de Lamennais (1782–1854), who developed the themes of Catholic traditionalism with remarkable polemical vigour in the first phase of his thought. In the first of the four tomes of the *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion* (Paris, 1817–1823), he judges the establishment of modern thought in completely negative terms after Europe, faithful to the Christian religion, had been saved for fifteen centuries "from the mortal drowsiness of indifference". This "terrible illness" revives "at the moment in which reason, rebelling against the supreme authority which had guided it until then, made every effort to regain the servile independence from which the Christian religion had delivered it". The Protestant Reformation is under accusation here, because "from its very beginning it was an anarchic system of philosophy and a monstrous attack on the general power that governs the society of intelligences", thus making the human mind "regress to paganism" and the scepticism which characterized the late Roman empire (*Oeuvres complètes de F. de La Mennais* (Paris, P. Daubrée et Caillex, 1836–1837 [repr. Frankfurt a.M., 1967]), I, pp. 67–68).

Modern philosophers are mentioned in chapter XIII ('Du fondement de la certitude'), but it is in the ensuing *Défense de l'Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion* (1821) that Lamennais outlines a personal general history of philosophy, particularly in chapter II ('De la philosophie, de son origine, et de ses divers systèmes': *Oeuvres complètes*, V, pp. 9–18) and in chapters III–VIII, devoted to individual thinkers of the modern age (Descartes, Malebranche, Leibniz, Bacon, Pascal, Bossuet, Nicole, and Euler: pp. 19–74); he then expands on the "danger of philosophy which places the principle of certainty in the reason of the individual man". Just like Bonald, Lamennais starts by observing that philosophy, though it has as its object the search for truth, historically has produced only a series of mistakes, in contrast with the existence among all peoples of a core of "prime truths which are universally believed" and "rise above the night of philosophical doctrines". These "primordial truths" were preserved by the ancient peoples of the East, from where they were transmitted to Pythagoras, Plato and "all the greatest geniuses of Greece". Reversing the most common historiographical perspective, Lamennais thus rehabilitates the "fixity" of the ancient East, which is related to obedience, faith, and respect for traditions which "linked the past to the present and restrained the fervor for innovation engendered by pride and by the secret restlessness which torments the human heart" (p. 11). He therefore has a highly negative opinion of the philosophy of the Greeks (which arose by distinguishing itself from religion) along with their political system which was modelled on democracy and the critical attitude: Greek philosophy was a "philosophy against nature, which destroyed human reason by breaking the connection that unites minds to one another and to divine reason itself" (p. 14).

With the advent of Christianity, “religion was at first the only philosophy of the Christians, just as it had originally been the philosophy of all men”; but then the attempt to reconcile the doctrines of the Greeks with Christian dogmas gave rise to heresies, which came to an end as a consequence of the barbarian invasions and the breakdown of study. Here too Lamennais reverses contemporary opinion and observes that the “century of ignorance” was in fact a “century of faith” and an “epoch of peace” (p. 16) which died away with the arrival of the works of Aristotle from the Arab East: divisions, disputes, and heresies therefore rose again, reaching their climax with Protestantism, “the father of modern unbelief”. Descartes can take credit for demolishing Peripateticism and its “innumerable absurdities”, but he in turn started from the same principle as that adopted by the Greek philosophers and “attained, against his will, the same result: that is, doubt”. The “multitude of philosophical systems” originating after Descartes is grouped into three trends, corresponding to the three means of knowledge (senses, feeling, reasoning); we thus have: a) the “materialistic system” of Locke, Condillac, Helvétius, and Cabanis, which is defined as “essentially sceptical”; b) the “idealism” of Kant and his disciples, who tried to find “the foundation of certainty in our inner impressions”, ending up by doubting the reality of external objects and the validity of their own inner perceptions; and c) Descartes’ “dogmatism”, later adopted in schools, which bases certainty on reasoning but whose outcomes are no less dangerous and sceptical than those of the other two systems (p. 18).

(c) *The introduction of the history of philosophy into university education: Royer-Collard*

Degérando’s *Histoire comparée* represents the most important contribution to the historiography of philosophy of the Napoleonic age, but there is another notable contribution – of an institutional nature this time – that was to significantly affect the diffusion of the study of the history of philosophy in France during the nineteenth century. We refer here to the official entry of the history of philosophy into the university system, which followed the creation of a specific chair of *Philosophie et opinions des philosophes* (6th May, 1809) in the Faculty of Letters in Paris, which was soon renamed *Histoire de la philosophie* (1810) and finally changed to *Histoire de la philosophie moderne* when a chair of *Histoire de la philosophie ancienne* was added in 1814. Entrusted for a few months (May–December 1809) to Claude-Emmanuel Pastoret, who was shortly afterwards appointed senator by Napoleon, this course had as its *adjoint* the *abbé* Charles Millon (1754–1839), the former librarian of the prince of Condé and teacher of law at the Central School of the Panthéon, who in 1803 had edited a translation of Aristotle’s *Politics*. In October 1810, Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard was appointed to the chair, which he formally occupied until his death (1845), even though he only actually held three courses (1811–1814) as he had also been appointed to high administrative and political office. At first, Royer-Collard had the *abbé* Millon as his *adjoint* and then Victor Cousin as his supply teacher (1815) and then as *adjoint* in the years 1828–1830. Cousin, who moved to the chair of history of ancient philosophy in 1830 (which had first been held by the *abbé* Millon), was replaced as *adjoint* by Jouffroy (1830–1837)

and then by Damiron (1837–1842) and Garnier (1842–1845). After Royer-Collard's death, the chair was held for about fifteen years by Damiron.

Royer-Collard can be credited with having favoured the rise of the teaching of the history of philosophy, as we can see from his inaugural lesson to the course (4th December 1811), the opening lesson of the academic year 1813–1814, and later lectures on Descartes, Malebranche, Locke, Berkeley, and Leibniz (*Les fragments philosophiques de Royer-Collard, réunis et publiés pour la première fois à part, avec une introduction sur la philosophie écossaise et spiritualiste au XIXe siècle*, ed. by A. Schimberg (Paris, 1913), pp. 1–19, 176–94, 195–249; the lessons on pages 20–175, corresponding to the years 1812–1813, have a merely speculative character). Praised by Cousin as the “father of French spiritualism”, Royer-Collard had taken up Thomas Reid's philosophy of “common sense” in opposition to the position of Condillac and seventeenth and eighteenth-century thought in general, which he considered to be vitiated by “idealism”, that is, by the rejection of the possibility of knowing the outside world directly and therefore by the sceptical doubt concerning the very existence of this world (pp. 176–178).

This perspective characterized and influenced his teaching of the history of philosophy, giving it a strong theoretical slant and making his entire interest focus on modern thought. Indeed he does not outline a general history of philosophy and merely refers to the existing literature: Brucker, Meiners, Tiedemann, and Buhle, who are mentioned with praise in his opening lesson (p. 11), where he clearly takes into consideration Degérando and his *Histoire comparée*, from whose ‘Introduction’ he seems to derive a large part of his conceptual armoury. “The history of philosophy”, he emphatically declares, “must begin from the history of the opinions formulated by the philosophers concerning the human mind”, that is to say, concerning the faculties of man and the laws which govern knowledge and action. The present study of philosophical opinions mainly follows the chronological method, with the aim of creating a “faithful and complete account of doctrines”; on the other hand, the method based on the classification of the different systems is the “most advantageous for teaching” (pp. 2–3). Systems are different not only because of the greater complexity of the “mysteries of thought” compared with the phenomena of the physical world, but also because of the obstacles produced by human language, and more particularly by the arbitrary use of similes and metaphors. Hence his overall, and certainly far from new verdict on ancient and modern thought: “The fault or misfortune of ancient philosophy was to seek causes in material analogies: this filled intelligence with chimerical beings, such as Plato's eternal ideas and Aristotle's sensible species. Modern philosophy uses more exact methods and bases most of its systems on facts that are certain; but, as it concentrates entirely on the ambitious plan of making man in his entirety correspond to a single fact, it tends to exaggerate the power of causes and does not appear rigorous in explaining the phenomena they [i.e. the causes] are unable to reach” (p. 8). He greatly admires the innovation brought by Descartes, and recognizes his merit in having removed “analogical reasoning” from philosophy and in having been the first to “separate intellectual phenomena from sensible phenomena”; his path was then followed by Malebranche, Arnauld, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Condillac, Bonnet, and Reid. But Descartes

remained far from the Baconian method, and "instead of gradually rising to causes by means of the patient observation of effects, he dared to hope he could attain knowledge of causes thanks to the power of his genius alone", and ended up by founding "the science of man and the universe only on the basis of thought" and therefore innate ideas. Royer-Collard protests against Locke's French disciples, on the other hand, for having created an impoverished image of man, both on an epistemological level ("what experience can assure us that sensation is sufficient to make all regions of intelligence and feeling fruitful?") and an ethical one ("does not the morality of sensation lie completely in the vile principle of sensible interests?") (pp. 9–10).

This brief outline is proposed by Royer-Collard as an example of the results attained by the history of philosophy when, after the manner of Bacon, it starts from "facts" (that is to say, from doctrines organized according to systems) and reaches their causes (the intellectual faculties) by induction. Evident echoes of the opening pages of Degérando's *Histoire comparée* are present here: this work of induction implies that "systems, considered from this point of view, are the most precious materials, because the opinions of the geniuses of all ages provide the most extensive and instructive experience which has ever been made concerning the human mind". Furthermore, it is "evident that the results of the history of philosophy will be more extensive and better established if analogous systems are associated and compared with one another" using the method of analysis. It is certain that "philosophical science has not attained the state of perfection" which makes it possible to classify systems "according to genera and species", but it has to pursue this goal. It is necessary to discover in each system, however vast, "a generating principle through which it can be comprehended and brought back to this level", that is, to the faculties of the human intellect. Indeed, "many repetitions might be spared [...], if the account of each class of system were made clear by a rapid theory of the faculty to which they belong. A course on the history of philosophy would thus become somehow a course on philosophy, in which historical analysis would take up ample space" (pp. 12–13). In a word, this is a sort of French approach to the identity of philosophy and the history of philosophy from an epistemological point of view, which Cousin was to develop and institutionalize.

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4.1 Joseph-Marie Degérando (1772–1842)

Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie

4.1.1 Born in Lyon on 29th February, 1772, into a wealthy family of Italian origin, Joseph-Marie Degérando (or De Gerando or de Gérando) was educated by the Oratorians and was about to take holy orders when the constituent Assembly abolished the religious congregations. At the end of 1792 he went through a profound

spiritual crisis, in the same period in which he had been reading the *philosophes*, and he experienced a period of scepticism, which came to an end at Easter 1796 with his return to the Catholic faith. He had moderate political views but, following the massacres of September 1792, he took part in the armed rebellion against the municipality of Lyons and the Jacobins. He was wounded in the leg and imprisoned but managed to avoid the death sentence; he subsequently joined the army of the Convention but was identified while staying in Lyon, and found shelter in Lausanne and then Naples, where he worked as an accountant for a relative until the autumn of 1796, when, thanks to an amnesty granted by the Directorate, he was allowed to go back to France. After the coup d'état of the 18th Fructidor (4th September, 1797) he left France again in order to accompany his exiled friend Camille Jordan, a member of the Council of Five Hundred, who was threatened with deportation thanks to his activity in defence of the freedom of worship, to Germany – to Tübingen and then to Weimar. In this way, Degérando managed to meet Herder and study his thought as well as that of Jacobi; moreover, Jordan taught him the English language, which enabled him to read the original works of the Scottish philosophers. Once back in his homeland, the young Degérando entered a regiment of huntsmen and, towards the end of 1798 married Marie-Anne (Annette) de Rathsamhausen. Annette, who descended from an old Alsatian family and was extremely well-read (she was also acquainted with Friedrich Schlegel), performed an important role in Degérando's cultural growth and career, initially pointing him towards the study of German literature, then helping him to enter educated Parisian society, in particular the circle of Mme de Staël. It was thanks to Annette's collaboration that Degérando succeeded in writing a *mémoire* which he entered into a competition announced by the *Institut* on the theme of 'The influence of signs on the formation of ideas'.

In April, 1799 his *mémoire* won the competition, bringing a decisive turning point to the life of this obscure soldier-philosopher: Degérando was sent on unlimited leave and, after a brief stay in Lyon, Lucien Bonaparte – the new Minister of the Interior – called him to the capital and appointed him secretary of the *Bureau consultatif des arts et du commerce*. In Paris, the *Idéologues* admitted him to the *Société d'Auteuil* and the *Société des Observateurs de l'Homme* as well as the *Institut*, and in 1800 he was charged with teaching moral philosophy at the *Lycée*. However, Degérando's brilliant career as a civil servant was accompanied by his growing distance from the *Idéologues*, thanks to philosophical differences but also for political and religious reasons. His career as a member of the administration continued under Napoleon and during the Restoration: in 1804 Degérando became secretary-general of the Ministry of the Interior and accompanied Napoleon to Milan to be crowned king of Italy; in his role as a *maître des requêtes* at the Council of State, he was sent to Rome as part of the committee responsible for reorganizing the territories of Tuscany, Umbria, and Latium, which had been annexed to the Empire; in 1811 he was appointed councillor of the Council of State; the following year he received the title of baron of the Empire, and a year later he was sent to the Iberian Peninsula as a superintendent of Northern Catalonia. In 1813 he returned to Paris; during the short interval of the Hundred Days he was dismissed from office, but

after the return of Louis XVIII he re-entered the Council of State, even though his tasks were reduced during the Restoration. While he never neglected his philosophical interests (from 1814 he joined the circle surrounding Maine de Biran), Degérando also devoted himself to the study of the law, and in 1819 he inaugurated a course in public and administrative law at the Sorbonne. At the same time, spurred on by his ethical and religious convictions, he devoted himself to the field of economic aid and welfare, earning international fame. In particular, he founded an institute, with a workroom, intended to shelter young women who had fallen “victims to seducers or had temporarily gone astray”. Among his merits we must also mention the support he gave to the establishment of the *École des chartes* (1821). Under the Orleanist monarchy he was appointed member of the House of Peers (1837), where he worked in particular on the debate concerning the law of juvenile work. He died in Paris on 10th November, 1842.

4.1.2 Degérando’s extensive and manifold literary production began with some pamphlets (now lost) which he wrote together with Camille Jordan in 1791 and 1792 in defence of the freedom of conscience and worship. Other texts, unpublished or lost, date to his stay in Naples. There followed a markedly philosophical phase, which was characterised while he was guest of Mme de Staël by the prize-winning *mémoire* of 1799 and its publication in Paris (1799–1800) by the publishers Goujon, Fuchs, and Henrichs in four large volumes entitled *Des signes et de l’art de penser, considérés dans leurs rapports mutuels*. The work was initially received favourably, although it was criticized for its prolixity, and the *Idéologues* accepted it with some reservations because it distanced itself from radical sensualism. Indeed, the study of human language and thought rests on a definition of “signs” considered as “means used by the mind to make up for immediate perceptions, thus providing us with the representation of that which we no longer perceive”: hence “sensation” is insufficient and should be accompanied by “an additional faculty, imagination, so as to obtain man in his entirety” (*Des signes*, ‘Introduction’, p. xxvi). Of interest here is the connection between history and experience, which fully justifies the use of a historical perspective in addition to the more strictly theoretical one, according to a scheme which, a few years later, was to provide the inspiration for the *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie* (“After consideration I believe that, before venturing any hypothesis concerning our future advances, it is necessary to gather all enlightening information, obtained through observation, on our previous state [...]. This Work will be therefore divided into two parts. In the first part, I analyse facts and as a result I draw the history of what we have been, I present the picture of what we are, I examine how the human mind made use of signs, and how they influenced the progress or defects of our knowledge. In the second part, I create a theory by which I try to consider what we may become, to discover the causes able to guide us, and to know how signs may be improved [...]”: I, Ch. 1, p. 30).

In 1800 the *Société des Observateurs de l’Homme* published in Paris the *Considérations sur les diverses méthodes à suivre dans l’observation des peuples sauvages*; English tr.: *The Observation of Savage Peoples*, ed. by F.C.T. Moore (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969; 2nd ed., 2004). This essay was written in view of

the expedition Nicolas-Thomas Baudin was to undertake to Australia and Tasmania (1800–1803) and it represents “one of the most extraordinary incunabula of modern ethnological methodology” (Moravia², p. 224). This field of study, which centres around the *science de l’homme*, also includes the *Mémoire sur le sauvagement de l’Aveyron* and two essays on ‘pasigraphy’ (a method for elaborating a universal philosophical language, a theme cherished by the *Idéologues*), which had been presented to the *Institut*. Degérando also read a memoir to the *Institut* on Kant (1801), a thinker he had started to study in 1797.⁹ We can also note that, from 1798, he had planned a translation of Johann Gottfried Karl Kiesewetter’s “excellent analysis” of Kant’s critical philosophy which had been published in Berlin that year (*Versuch einer faßlichen Darstellung der wichtigsten Wahrheiten der neuern*

Philosophie für Uneingeweihte), as well as the Kantian *Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Prolegomena to Perhaps Any Future Metaphysics*; on the advice of his friends, he subsequently abandoned the idea of publishing these works (cf. *Hist. comp.*¹, II, pp. 175 and 178).

Continuing his philosophical inquiry, Degérando took part in a competition announced by the Academy of Sciences of Berlin, which he won *ex aequo* with a memoir entitled *De la génération des connaissances humaines* (Berlin, G. Decker, 1802, pp. 304; new ed.: Paris, 1990), judged favourably by Mme de Staël. This *mémoire* was soon followed by the three octavo volumes of the *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie, relativement aux principes des connaissances humaines* which were published in Paris “chez Henrichs, rue de la Loi, n° 1231 (Ancienne Librairie de Du Pont)” in year XII (1804): I, pp. lxxv–476; II, pp. 511; III, pp. 581 (repr. Paris 2014). This work was translated into German by Tennemann, who added his own annotations: *Vergleichende Geschichte der Systeme der Philosophie* (Marburg, 1806), 2 vols. Nearly twenty years later, Degérando prepared a second edition – “revue, corrigée et augmentée” – of his work, part I of which, however, was published in four octavo volumes, up to the end of Scholasticism (Paris, Alexis Eymery, 1822–1823, pp. xlii–502, 495, 480, 612–iv; repr. Paris 2014). Part II, with the subtitle *Histoire de la philosophie moderne, à partir de la Renaissance des lettres jusqu’à la fin du Dix-huitième siècle*, appeared posthumously edited by his son Gustave, magistrate and philanthropist (Paris, Librairie philosophique de Ladrangé, 1847, 4 octavo vols, pp. xii–448, 444, 484, and 458).

The *Histoire comparée* was written in the same period as the *Éloge de Dumarsais* (Paris, Henrichs, 1805, pp. 106), which had previously won the *Institut*’s prize and was related to Degérando’s interests in philosophy and linguistics, and the memoir

⁹ ‘Institut National. Notice des travaux de la Classe des sciences morales et politiques’ [...], par le c.[= citoyen] Lévesque, Secrétaire, ME, a. VII (1801), iii, pp. 510–511: “Elles [= the difficulties in studying Kant] n’ont pas effrayé le C.[= Citoyen] Degérando. Dans un mémoire dont il a fait lecture dans la classe, il a tracé l’histoire de la naissance et des progrès de cette doctrine, et a saisi les points de vue principaux qui pouvaient en simplifier l’examen”. While paying due homage to the “productive and audacious genius” of the German thinker, he observed that “ce novateur philosophe, par la nature de ses méthodes, inspire des justes préventions contre son système, et qu’elles sont encore augmentées par les prétentions qu’il affecte, et par l’obscurité dont il s’enveloppe, ou que peut-être il ne peut éviter”.

on the *Influence de l'esprit de méditation sur les lettres*, which appeared in the official documents of the Turin Imperial Academy (1805), of which Degérando was a member. Here it is also worth mentioning Degérando's contribution to the *Archives littéraires de l'Europe, ou Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie par une Société de gens de lettres* (Paris, 1804–1808; repr. Geneva, 1972). A few years later, he wrote a report concerning the advances made by philosophy from 1789 onwards which was submitted to Napoleon and the Council of State on 20th February, 1808 by the Class of ancient history and literature of the *Institut*. It was published in Paris in 1810 by Bon-Joseph Dacier within the framework of the *Rapport historique sur les progrès de l'histoire et de la littérature depuis 1789, et sur leur état actuel* (pp. 278–355: ‘Philosophie’) and was reprinted in the appendix to the second edition of the *Histoire comparée* (part II, 1847, vol. IV, pp. 385–456; a new edition of the *Rapport historique*, ed. by F. Hartog, came out in Paris in 1989).

The principles which had inspired Degérando in the writing up of his ‘report’—and which were functional to the ideology underlying the Napoleonic regime—are mentioned in a letter addressed to the Emperor quoted at the end of the text: “The spectacle of the abuses carried out in the name of philosophy in the field of morals, religion, and political institutions has been the reason which, ever since my youth, has induced me to concern myself with this study. I envisaged a plan beyond my powers but eagerly pursued by my heart to reconcile philosophy with the truths which are at the basis of human happiness and the quiet life of States. [...] The philosophy which encourages reason not to prohibit but to found religious ideas, which allies itself with the Christian religion, which recognises natural morality, respecting established institutions, is therefore the true Socratic philosophy, whose history I have traced in my work. It is exclusively in the interest of the latter that I have tried to ascertain the measure of the progress attained or the mistakes made, and this philosophy, which is nothing but the reason residing in men of virtue, can entrust its designs and the aim of its efforts to the restorer of public morals and all the institutions protecting them” (*Hist. comp.*², II/4, p. 455; for an analysis of the *Rapport* see Daled, *Le matérialisme occulté*, pp. 113–122).

The works of Degérando published during the Restoration and the subsequent Orleanist monarchy reflect the shift in his interests from the speculative field to the practical one, and embrace a wide range of interests, from welfare and education (*Le visiteur du pauvre* (Paris, 1820; fourth ed. 1837; new ed. 1990; English transl.: Boston, 1832); *Du perfectionnement moral, ou De l'éducation de soi-même* (Paris, 1827, 2 vols; English transl.: Boston, 1830); *De l'éducation des sourds-muets de naissance* (Paris, 1827), 2 vols; *Cours normal des instituteurs primaires, ou Directions relatives à l'éducation physique, morale et intellectuelle dans les écoles primaires* (Paris, 1832, fifth ed. 1859); *De la bienfaisance publique* (Paris, 1839), 4 vols), to administrative law (*Instituts du droit administratif français, ou Éléments du code administratif, réunis et mis en ordre* (Paris, 1829–1836), 6 vols) and the problems relating to industrialization: *Des progrès de l'industrie, considérés dans leurs rapports avec la moralité de la classe ouvrière* (Paris, 1841). In addition, Degérando published several speeches, *notices* (worth mentioning is one on Plato, which is included in tome XXXV of the *Biographie universelle*), and celebrations. Among

several writings which were not published are a *Traité de l'existence de Dieu* and a *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie morale*, “considered in relation to the principles of duty”: Degérando himself informs us that he has provided an “abridged exposition” of the courses held for three years at Paris *Athénée*, but that he did not have time to revise it for publication and the help given by his friend Camille Jordan, who died young, had been in vain (*Hist. comp.*², I/1, p. 110).

4.1.3 The theoretical cornerstones of the *Histoire comparée* are clearly outlined in the initial pages. The need to establish a relationship of productive continuity with the past is reflected in a quotation from Quintilian (*Inst. orat.*, 12, 11), placed at the bottom of the back of the title page, contrasting the idea that everything has to start again *ex novo*.¹⁰ As the short dedication to the Berlin Academy immediately indicates, the work is the continuation of the *mémoire* on the generation of human knowledge which the Academy had awarded a prize (*Hist. comp.*¹, I, p. v). Central importance is therefore given to the relationship with gnoseology or – as Degérando writes in his ‘Introduction’ – with “first philosophy” (I, p. xx; but see also pp. 28–29, where the author stresses that the transition from “simple opinions” to philosophy as the “true science” takes place only when “the fundamental principles of human knowledge” are laid down, principles which are defined on page xviii as “the pivot of philosophy in its entirety”). Historiography is thus proposed to test and develop a gnoseology which is related to the themes of the later Enlightenment, and which have as their point of reference Condillac: the same Condillac Degérando openly declares himself to be a follower of, but whose mistakes in the history of philosophy he does not hesitate to denounce (I, p. 51). The work’s fundamental orientation is similarly inspired by the Enlightenment (it is enough to mention the reference to Bacon in the *Discours préliminaire* to the *Encyclopédie*: cf. *Models*, III, pp. 11–12), which is in turn inspired by Bacon’s aspiration for a “complete and universal literary history”, whose “soul” should be constituted by connections of cause and effect, which allow us to “determine the circumstances which have been beneficial or unfavourable to the sciences” (I, p. viii). The climax (*le sommet*) of this “universal history of the human mind” is represented by the history of philosophy because, “whether we consider philosophy as a *general method* or as the *nomenclature of the fundamental principles* on which all the sciences and the arts are based, it is at least certain that it constitutes the centre where all the rays of light which guide the human mind toward these different applications come to unite” (I, pp. x–xi [italics in the text], where the author refers to *De augmentis scientiarum*, III, 1; cf. *Models*, I, pp. 163–169).

Degérando is aware that the fulfilment of Bacon’s project is an arduous task; nevertheless, using a typical eighteenth-century metaphor, he believes it is at least

¹⁰“And these men had to discover these things, while we only have to learn about them! Antiquity has supplied us with all these teachers and models, so that one might well think that there is no age better to be born in than ours, for whose instruction previous ages have worked so hard”: Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education*, Vol. V: *Books 11–12*, ed. and transl. by D.A. Russell (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), p. 337.

possible “to set out some links in the creation of this great chain which is somehow designed to embrace the entire succession of human thoughts”; moreover, he is convinced, again following Bacon, that “from the vast combination of causes and effects” provided by the “revolutions of the sciences and the arts” it is possible to derive “some general law which, as they are linked to the very principles of revolutions”, can be used as a guide (I, pp. x-xi). The purpose is therefore to identify and list the few “main questions” which give rise to the “primary conditions” and the “essential characters”, that is to say, the “key” to every doctrine and “the connection uniting all its parts”. By this means it is possible to elaborate “a sort of *natural method*” for classifying the different philosophical doctrines on the basis of identifying elements present in the “germ” and the “roots” of the doctrines themselves, locating each system in the place to which it belongs in the “nomenclature” and “embracing in the same framework the whole history of philosophy”, with its advances and its errors. “A historical picture of the systems relating to these essential questions”, Degérando explains, “would thus represent with respect to philosophy itself what philosophy, in turn, represents with respect to the sciences and the arts: it would be a sort of map of the doctrines and opinions which make up the intellectual world; it would point out the main points, the divisions, and the different paths” (I, pp. xii-xvii).

“*Natural method*” (italics in the text) and “nomenclature”: these are the key terms to Degérando’s historiographical theory, recalling the principal epistemological principles of the anatomists and naturalists of the time, like Charles-Louis Dumas, the author of a *Système méthodique de nomenclature et de classification des muscles du corps humain* (Montpellier, 1797), or the renowned Georges Cuvier, a colleague of Degérando at the *Lycée* and permanent secretary of the *Institut National*. Indeed, a little later, Degérando stresses that in order for the history of philosophy to become truly useful, the philosophers must “imitate the naturalists, who, before involving us in the vast regions of natural history, present us with simple, regular nomenclatures, and look for the principle of these nomenclatures in the essential characteristics of each production” (I, pp. xxix-xxv). This was also Degérando’s aim, and his work serves precisely as a “general introduction to the whole history of philosophy”: not a “simple *narrative history*, using Bacon’s words, [since] it would not reach its goal if it limited itself to a mere account of the facts. It is instead an *inductive or comparative history*. In presenting the facts, it must turn them, using a series of parallels, into as many *experiences* on the path of the human mind. [...] The work we undertake can therefore be considered as an essay which corresponds to a philosophical treatise concerning the essential questions of this science, although it is formulated according to the most prudent – and most neglected – method, namely the method of experiences; we dare therefore to present it as an *essay in experimental philosophy*” (I, pp. xxv-xxvi, italics in the text).

For Degérando, therefore, historiography is an essentially philosophical activity: even though he followed in the path of the empiricist tradition under the tutelary deity of Bacon, he differed from Condorcet because, as Gueroult convincingly observed, “the idea of man’s indefinite progress is replaced by the idea of a purely static classification after the fashion of the naturalists, and the basis of the history of

philosophy is no longer the movement of natural and social phenomena towards science [...], but the existence of a specifically philosophical problem clearly distinct from scientific problems, namely the problem of knowledge. This concern to bring philosophy back to itself was a sign of the influence of the German philosophers. Bacon's striving for historical objectivity, on the other hand, revealed the desire to escape from metaphysics, a desire foreign or even opposed to the German philosophers" (Gueroult, pp. 709–710).

The equation between philosophical doctrines and "experiences" led to the definitive elimination of the dichotomy between philosophy and history which had found its most radical expression in Descartes and Malebranche, but which was also perceptible in the peculiar Cartesian reformulation of empiricism which characterised Condillac's philosophy. It was not by chance that Degérando distanced himself without hesitation from Condillac's *Traité des systèmes*, which, far more than Bacon's *De augmentis scientiarum*, could be considered the true source of inspiration for the *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie*. "Condillac", Degérando painstakingly observes, "attempted to demonstrate the disadvantages and risks in the systems founded on *abstract principles*"; Degérando on the other hand aimed at "presenting the different systems, whatever nature they may have, within the framework of their reasons, causes, effects, so that their disadvantages or risks subsequently become manifest naturally and in some way by themselves; the systems founded on *abstract principles* are not the only ones we will subject to this kind of criticism; we will not content ourselves with showing that true systems must be founded on experience; we will try to show how they must profit from experience". Moreover, whereas Condillac limited himself to presenting a number of systems separately, choosing them here and there from the various epochs, Degérando aimed to describe the entire history of the different doctrines relating to the origin of human knowledge, emphasising the connections linking the "fundamental systems" to one another (I, pp. xxvii–xxviii). The aspiration to create a "general" as well as a systematic history of philosophy is thus fully justified from a theoretical point of view.

Now the question of the relationship with Condillac has been clarified, we must now define the character and novelty of a work from the point of view of the historiography of philosophy, adding to much existing literature. Degérando observes that most of the histories of philosophy available to him (which he gives a detailed survey of in chapter II) fall into two categories: the first includes historians who presented the doctrines of philosophers in support of their own personal positions; the second comprises all those who limited themselves to relating opinions without judging them, thus jeopardising all the theoretical and practical results of their research. Degérando, on the other hand, naturally claimed that he had overcome these unilateral positions thanks to his "experimental" approach: his purpose was to "describe the facts as if we were foreign to any opinion, and then we established an opinion on the basis of the evidence of the facts alone", aiming in particular at emphasising "the connection (*liaison*) and the subordination of the systems" (I, pp. xxx–xxxI). This, however, meant he had no model of reference; indeed Degérando was aware that even the subdivision of the work into two separate parts (a

"historical survey" presenting the main epistemological systems followed by the "critical analysis" of these systems) could easily lead to some repetition (I, p. xxxiii); something that indeed happened.

Besides the "experimental" side, however, there was another aspect which emerges in the final pages of the 'Introduction' and projects Degérando's historiographical work into the future, linking it to Cousin's eclecticism. He acknowledges that the purpose of creating a "neutral" account of the different schools or philosophical "sects" is not destined to be successful, because the reader's interest is usually stirred by most extreme positions. It follows that the "plan for reconciliation" between the different sects would also inevitably arouse much criticism. "However", and here Degérando outlines a theory of the historiography of philosophy that goes far beyond its later-Enlightenment origins, "the history of philosophy shows that all conciliatory systems and impartial doctrines aroused little enthusiasm [and] rarely proved useful to their authors, yet the entire history of philosophy leads us back to these systems and these doctrines, considering them to be the wisest in themselves and the most useful to science" (I, p. xxxviii).

This clearly eclectic result is confirmed by the following acknowledgement that "there are praiseworthy people and friends of truths in all the different schools". On the other hand, "history teaches us that the most erroneous opinions may be the product of the purest intentions. To these friends of truth, wherever they are, we offer with simplicity and honesty the peace treaty whose bases we are now working out, so as to make it more truthful, complete and, if possible, admissible" (I, p. xxviii; see also II, p. 396, where Degérando declares that the philosophy of experience offers Idealism and Materialism a "peace treaty, founded on the dual experience of external senses and inner sentiment"). Expressions such as *projet de pacification* or *traité de paix* have a political ring and probably reflect the prevailing climate of the months (the dedication is dated February 1803) in which Napoleon's consulate had reassured the *émigrés*, and the fragile treaty of Amiens, which had been reached with England one year earlier, still held, albeit with difficulty. Confirmation of this political colouring (an attempt to heal the lacerations caused by the Jacobin experience) is found in Degérando's desire that his intentions might be "appreciated by all those who are equally concerned about the interests of morals and the interests of the lights of reason, and who suffer seeing them opposed to each other, [whereas] all reasons tend to unite them, and see the real aim of philosophy as an effort to associate them closely" (I, p. xxxix). These are merely hints, but it is this connection between eclecticism, the history of philosophy, and politics which was to be taken up again a quarter of a century later, with quite different emphasis, by Victor Cousin.

Some further elements to complete the theoretical picture we have outlined so far can be taken from the initial chapter of the first part. Here Degérando does not conceal that the first impressions made by the history of philosophy are hardly comforting: a "multitude of hypotheses" which rapidly follow one another and cancel each other out, divisions into "sects", endless debates, mistakes blindly propagated, "reforms announced every century but never carried out", recurrent conflicts between Idealism and Materialism as well as recurrent fluctuations between

Dogmatism and Scepticism, the same issues which continue to be discussed twenty centuries later... However, any observer who is attentive and capable of judging will consider this pitiful and distressing picture in a quite different way: indeed, this bewildering variety of systems is justified by the attempt of the human mind to appraise its own powers and to “open up a passage to still unknown regions”, reaching results which, however relative and partial, still contribute to the attainment of truth. Here Degérando significantly quotes a famous passage from Leibniz concerning the “traces of truth” which we can perceive in our predecessors and which must be retrieved, just as we extract gold from mud, diamond from a mine, or light from darkness, thus giving form to a *perennis quaedam philosophia* (I, p. 7).

A little over sixty years before, the same quotation had been used by Deslandes in the opposite sense, to maintain, with reference mainly to medieval thinkers, that it is not worthwhile wasting a lot of time to recover only a few specks of gold, and he had indeed criticised those such as Leibniz in particular, who try all means to reconcile ancient and modern philosophy (see *Models*, II, pp. 189 and 201). Degérando on the other hand definitely recognises the presence of “precious sparks” beside “serious mistakes” even in the most forgotten or disregarded philosophers, such as the Alexandrian syncretists, the Scholastics, or the writers of the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Mistakes themselves include the “germs” or the “intuition” of truth, and “there is hardly any dispute in which the two parties are not right from some point of view: truth is thus regrettably divided into two fragments which the two adversaries share out among themselves, refusing to unite them”. And again: “A superficial man sees in the contradiction between the philosophical sects nothing but a battle for authority which seems to allow all paradoxes, whereas a thinker penetrates further and sees how these controversies gave rise to important problems. On the other hand, the scene of disputes and mistakes, if observed by someone who is able to detect their origin and notice their effects, represents a precious collection of experiences on the path followed by the human mind” (I, pp. 8–9).

These words, which seem to confirm Degérando’s eclecticism, push the elements emphasised at the beginning further: besides Bacon, now the ‘rationalist’ Leibniz also appears like a tutelary deity... Eclecticism had certainly been a distinguishing feature of the historiography of philosophy, which arose from the Enlightenment. Deslandes, Brucker, Diderot, and Genovesi had all openly declared themselves as eclectics, but here eclecticism was understood as independent judgement and a refusal to adopt a sectarian spirit, whereas in Degérando it is characterised by the need to overcome the opposition between rationalism and empiricism: this was a typically Kantian aspiration (and the opposition itself was Kantian) which Degérando, however, does not solve by using transcendental philosophy but by re-reading Condillac’s gnoseology in the light of Scottish philosophy. He thus arrived at a “philosophy of Experience” which constituted the mean term between the opposite poles of Rationalism and Empiricism and was deliberately differentiated from Empiricism.

Indeed, in defining the origin of the various philosophical systems in the beginnings of Greek philosophy, Degérando observes that “some German writers appear

constantly to confuse Empiricism [just defined as "the system that concentrates exclusively on sensible impressions and therefore refuses to provide the data of experience with the help of speculative truths"] with the philosophy of Experience. But there are essential differences between them, and they are as distant from each other as the philosophy of Experience is from Rationalism. We may say that Empiricism and Experience use, if you will, of the same data, facts. But for the former these facts remain isolated, scattered, inanimate; no general truth intervenes between them so as to transform them and enlarge their results. On the contrary, in Experience they acquire a fertility due to the general laws uniting them. Empiricism perceives nothing but the outside of the temple of nature, Experience penetrates its inner sanctum. Empiricism is an instinct, Experience an art. Empiricism perceives nothing but phenomena, Experience goes back from the effects to the causes. Empiricism is shut up in the present, Experience reads the future in the past. Empiricism obeys blindly, Experience formulates questions following a method. For Empiricism everything is movable and fugitive; Experience discovers regular and constant combinations under changeable appearances. But why do we need to dwell upon this distinction? Read Bacon and you will see it emerge from every page. Again, let us remark that there are two quite different types of Empiricism: one is rough, it precedes all philosophy and corresponds to the helplessness of a mind imprisoned by the chains of ignorance, foreign to the art of drawing comparisons; the other, by contrast, is subtle and systematic and involves very delicate analysis; it corresponds to the doubt of a penetrating mind asking questions about the great relation linking causes and effects, about the connection of a fact to another fact, but is unable to discover any principle to determine them" (II, pp. 359–360).

Degérando's philosophical position falls therefore on this side of Kant's critical philosophy (although the reference to the "general laws" governing our sensible knowledge could be read as an echo of "transcendental aesthetics"); this position, precisely because of its linearity and simplicity, far from the obscurities so frequent in Kant, was destined to enjoy great success, and served as a catalyst in the transition from the rigorously "scientific" perspective of the *Idéologues* to the spiritualism of Laromiguière, Royer-Collard, and then Cousin. The latter in particular was to systematically develop the appealing phrase: "experience reads the future in the past", which, taken out of context, almost sounds like Hegel.

We can now turn to the general framework of organization, which derives from the epistemological premises, which Degérando used to classify the articulate material constituting the history of philosophy, thus carrying out his aim of creating a complete and rigorously well-founded nomenclature. This framework, which plays a decisive role throughout *Histoire comparée*, is described in the transition from the first to the second part of the work, where Degérando mentions the "three great questions" to which all the other questions are connected: a) "the certainty of human knowledge"; b) "its origin"; and c) "its reality". Historically, these questions have been given opposite and contradictory answers, from which it is possible to derive "an intermediate and conciliatory answer" as well as a complete range of "shades" going from the middle term and the two extremes. *Scepticism* and *Dogmatism* are the two poles which correspond to the first question; *Empiricism* (or *Sensualism*)

and *Rational (Speculative or Contemplative) Philosophy* are the divergent answers to the second question; and as for the question of “what is the reality of knowledge”, “the one wishes to confine it to simple external objects affecting our organs; hence the system named *Materialism*. The other wishes to restrict it exclusively to the inner operations of the mind; hence the different types of *Idealism*”. So we come to the respective middle terms: in the first case, Dogmatism and Scepticism mutually correct one another because “we hold a statement only after we have doubted; by checking the soundness of our knowledge, we also define its limits. In the second case, sense and reason are reconciled; facts are combined with deductions. In the third, Idealism and Materialism complete each other. This position recognizes the dual reality of the objects known through inner sense and the external senses” (II, pp. 341–342).

This reveals a clear analogy with the Kantian frameworks revived by Fülleborn in *Beyträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie* and by Tennemann in his *Geschichte der Philosophie*, the first volume of which had been published in Leipzig in 1798 (cf. *Models*, III, pp. 732–740, 777–778 and 868–870). Indeed, Degérando defines the magazine edited by Fülleborn as an “extremely precious work” and regrets having become aware of it “too late” (*Hist. comp.*¹, II, p. 167, note). It is not by chance that the *Histoire comparée* was translated into German by Tennemann, despite his different position with respect to Kant’s philosophy. This interaction, which was the result of Degérando’s fruitful cultural experience on German soil, closed the gap which had grown during the eighteenth century between a history of philosophy understood as a *histoire de l’esprit humain* (a typically French product which had followers in Germany too, such as Meiners) and a “systematic” history of philosophy of a distinctly German nature, leading, nevertheless, French production into that academic stream which was later to be officially consecrated in the educational system thanks to Cousin and his school.

The interweaving of these two ways of understanding the history of philosophy, thanks to their common epistemological basis, is particularly clear in chapter III of part II, where Degérando formulates a long series of “considerations concerning the course of the human mind in the formation of philosophical systems”. Starting with a parallel between philosophy and the fine arts, Degérando points out “an analogy in purpose and means, intentions and methods” between philosophy and poetry. Indeed, the success of poetry is also due to a “hidden philosophy” which can be brought to light through analysis: poets are able to profoundly grasp the laws that govern the faculties of man as well as “the needs of our mind and the interplay of our passions”; they arouse man’s interest in the study of nature thanks to their fascinating descriptions and “lead us on an enchanted journey towards knowledge of ourselves”. The relationship between poetry and philosophy is analogous to that between “the first games a clever teacher prepares for children” and “the earnest studies” subsequently conducted in adolescence. The historical examples from the repertoire of the *histoire de l’esprit humain*, are as follows: Orpheus, Homer, and Hesiod were the first philosophers of the Greeks, just as in the modern age Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso anticipated the “restoration of philosophy”; the “brilliant reign of Augustus”, which preceded the diffusion of philosophy among the Romans,

corresponds to the age of pope Leo X and the Medici, who favoured a return to the "pure doctrines of Antiquity"; "in England, the reign of Elizabeth produced the immortal Shakespeare, the reign that followed saw the appearance of the immortal Bacon", whereas in France the development of poetry and the arts during the age of Louis XIV prepared for the advent of the "century of analysis" (II, pp. 399–400). Just as poetry does not limit itself to imitating nature, but enlivens it with its descriptions and allows it "to breathe in front of our eyes", so, thanks to observation and genius, philosophy is not restricted to enumerating the various parts of the universe (which is the task of the naturalist) but looks for the causes of phenomena and the purposes of the laws of nature, going beyond the sensible world, which acts as the "proscenium of nature". For this reason, "the intimate and mysterious alliance of the moral and the physical world represents the great art by which poetry fascinates us, eloquence stirs our interest, and philosophy enlightens us" (II, p. 401).

What is the difference, then, between philosophy and poetry? The former studies "general principles, beings of reason", whereas poetry creates "allegorical beings", even though in historical reality we come across "a multitude of conceptions which might be defined as semi-poetic", from Pythagoras' dyad and Anaxagoras' homoeomeries to Leibniz's monads and Descartes' vortexes (II, pp. 403–404). The parallel between philosophy and poetry is further developed with reference to the themes of harmony, unity, and the "marvellous", which Degérando illustrates with *ad hoc* doxographical reviews, until the discussion focuses on the notion of "system" and "philosophy". The definition of system is in line with the premises from which Degérando started: it consists of "a certain degree of concatenation between pieces of knowledge or ideas, to the art of making truth fruitful and drawing a number of results from some simple principles", so as to overcome "blind empiricism". As for philosophy, following the French translation of the *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* by Adam Smith (a writer whose name appears several times in this chapter) it is defined as the "science of the principles relating to the connection (*liaison*) between things". This definition, which according to Degérando is in accordance with most of the definitions provided by the ancient philosophers, corresponds to the radical question which is at the origin both of the cognitive activity of the individual and the general history of philosophy. Indeed, "the first movement of a child is to ask *Why?* of everything. This is the history of philosophers. We harbour deep within ourselves the source (*le foyer*) of a restless and unquenchable activity" (II, pp. 432–433; on Adam Smith's *Essays*, cf. *Models*, III, pp. 417–427).

This need to ask questions originates above all as a reaction to the "apparent disorders of nature" and has given rise to a long series of explanations which are typical of primitive peoples. Hiding behind the historian of philosophy here is the ethnologist, who draws on the *histoire de l'esprit humain* and in the footnote cites a whole collection of "eccentric explanations" which have been formulated by the various peoples of the earth to justify natural phenomena such as storms, eclipses, earthquakes, comets, or illnesses, and which led to the construction of gross systems (*Hist. comp.*¹, II, pp. 437–441). A "second order of systems" is related to the ancient cosmogonies which "present the history of the generation of things under an allegorical veil". Then we have the third order of systems which emerges when the

restlessness of the human mind, urged by dissatisfaction, turns to the base, rather than to the summit, of previously acquired knowledge. In this way “man makes the most important discovery, knowledge of himself”, and metaphysics, dialectic, and morals arise (II, p. 446). There are three constituent elements of a system (facts, hypotheses, and deductions), and it is the different proportion of these elements that brings about differences between systems. Degérando contrasts the systems based on the idea of harmony and a sort of “philosophical fantasy” – like those of Plato, Descartes, and Leibniz – with the “retrogressive systems” originating from the idea of disorder, like the chaos of the Ionians or the clash of atoms in Democritus, which are normally based on sensible knowledge; but there are also “mixed systems” – arising from the combination of the two first systems – and Degérando obviously adheres to these.

The perfection of a system depends on three factors: “the multitude of phenomena it embraces; the simplicity of the solutions it presents; and the rigour of the connection between its parts” (II, pp. 452–453). A perfect system, therefore, hardly ever becomes very popular, as happens instead in the case of philosophical “sects”, whose success rests on an easy desire for the new, a lack of rigour, and vanity. Degérando is aware that he will not gain much popularity, so he confirms his profession of eclecticism and identifies with those “reserved thinkers who occupy an intermediate position between extremes, make an effort to moderate their principles, are able to recognise the different merits of every opinion, and aspire to wisdom rather than to novelty” (II, p. 458). Half a century before, a similar profession of eclecticism had been made by Diderot in a famous entry of the *Encyclopédie* (see *Models*, III, pp. 28–29), with the intention of exalting free thought and distancing himself from the traditional philosophical sects. The Catholic Degérando, on the other hand, now places at the beginning of sectarianism “a crowd of people tired of the ancient conceptions and avid for revolutions disrupting the order of science as well as civil order”; it is in this perspective that he puts forward his eclecticism again (*Hist. comp.*¹, II, pp. 456–457). Hence even eighteenth-century eclecticism suffered the consequences of the French Revolution.

4.1.4 *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie*

4.1.4.1 The work opens with the dedication: ‘À l’Académie Royale des Sciences et des Lettres de Berlin’ (I, pp. v–vi) and an ‘Introduction’ (I, pp. vii–xl) followed by an extensive and analytical index (‘Table et sommaires de cet ouvrage’, I, pp. xli–lxxv). The text is clearly divided into two parts. The first part (‘Histoire abrégée des principaux systèmes de philosophie, relativement aux principes des connaissances humaines’) takes up all of tome I and pages 1–336 of tome II; it is subdivided into 17 chapters: i. ‘Objet et plan de cette partie’; ii. ‘Des historiens de la philosophie’; iii. ‘De l’origine de la philosophie’; iv. ‘Première période. École d’Ionie, Pythagore, Héraclite’; v. ‘Suite de la première période. Les deux Écoles d’Élée. Les Sophistes’; vi. ‘Seconde période: Socrate, Platon, et les trois Académies. Les Sceptiques’; vii. ‘Suite de la deuxième période. Aristote, Épicure et Zénon’; viii. ‘Troisième période.

Éclecticisme ou Synchrétisme. Règne des doctrines mystiques'; ix. 'Quatrième période. Les Arabes. Les Scholastiques. Règne de la philosophie d'Aristote'; x. 'Cinquième période. Réforme de la Philosophie. Bacon et son École. Méthodes expérimentales'; xi. 'Développements que la Doctrine de Bacon et de Locke a reçus en France et en Angleterre'; xii. 'Philosophes qui ont restreint le principe de l'expérience dans de plus étroites limites. Hobbes et son École. Éclectiques et Sceptiques modernes. Idéalistes'; xiii. 'Histoire du Cartésianisme'; xiv. 'Leibnitz et Wolf. Automatisme spirituel; principes de la contradiction et de la raison suffisante'; xvi. 'Kant et son École. Criticisme ou épreuve de la légitimité des connaissances. Formes et lois des facultés intellectuelles'; xvii. 'Coup d'œil sur les destinées de la philosophie critique et sur les divers systèmes sortis de l'École de Kant.'

The second part of the work ('Analyse critique des systèmes de philosophie sur la generation des connaissances humaines') includes the remaining part of tome II (pp. 373–511) and tome III. It is subdivided into 14 chapters: i. 'Dessein de cette seconde partie'; ii. 'L'histoire de la philosophie ramenée à un point de vue général'; iii. 'Considérations sur la marche de l'esprit humain dans la formation des systèmes philosophiques'; iv. 'Origine de quelques préjugés des philosophes; qu'ils proviennent presque toujours de ce qu'on a méconnu le vrai principe des connaissances'; v. 'Du progrès général des découvertes philosophiques dans l'antiquité'; vi. 'De la philosophie dans les temps modernes'; vii. '*Desiderata* qui subsistent encore en philosophie, au sujet des principes des connaissances humaines'; viii. 'Considérations sur la philosophie spéculative ou rationnelle'; ix. 'Considérations sur le Dogmatisme'; x. 'Considérations sur l'Idéalisme'; xi. 'Considérations sur le Scepticisme'; xii. 'Considérations sur l'Empyrisme'; xiii. 'Considérations sur le Criticisme'; xiv. 'De la Philosophie de l'expérience. Conclusion'.

In the second edition of the *Histoire comparée* (which is preceded by an 'Avertissement du Libraire-Éditeur': *Hist.comp.*², part I, vol. 1 [= I/1], pp. i–vi), the dedication to the Berlin Academy is replaced by a dedication 'À la mémoire de mon meilleur ami!' (I/1, pp. vii–viii), Camille Jordan, "the dear playmate of my childhood, the companion of the studies and adversities of my youth and the destiny of my entire life". He mentions his departed friend again in the final note added to the 'Introduction', where he describes how he had shared his study of the history of philosophy and had even "prepared much material for the history of moral philosophy" (I/1, p. xli). The 'Introduction' (I/1, pp. ix–xli) is the same as that of the first edition, except for four additional footnotes and an important variation intended to illustrate the changed structure of the work: "In order not to break the framework of the facts and preserve the most rigorous impartiality of this framework, we have taken care not to mix the account of the systems of philosophy with the critical observations they might give rise to, and we have set aside these observations, which constituted the second part of the first edition, with the intention of publishing them in a separate work [whose title, as is explained in a note at the end of chapter I, reads 'Considérations générales sur la marche de l'esprit humain dans les

sciences philosophiques': I/1, p. 92]. The account of the philosophical systems is in turn naturally subdivided into two distinct parts: one embraces the 'History of the revolutions of science and the different schools' in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages; the other includes the 'Framework of modern systems'" (I/1, pp. XXI-XXII; cf. *Hist. comp.*¹, I, pp. XXI-XXII).

Part I (which, as we have already noted, appeared in four volumes in the years 1822–1823) of the new and much more voluminous edition of the *Histoire comparée* therefore bears the subtitle 'Histoire des révolutions de la philosophie, et des Écoles philosophiques, dans l'Antiquité et le Moyen Âge', and is divided into 28 chapters. The 'Avertissement sur les notes de cette deuxième édition', which is placed after the 'Introduction' (*Hist. comp.*², I/1, p. XLII), explains that the longest notes, increased in number compared with the first edition, are placed at the end of each chapter, whereas the notes essential to the text remain at the foot of the page. The 'Table des chapitres' is placed at the end of the last volume, with its own page numbers (I/4, pp. I-IV), and has no analytical 'Sommaire', which has been moved to the beginning of each chapter. As for the four volumes of part II ('Histoire de la philosophie moderne, à partir de la renaissance des lettres jusqu'à la fin du dix-huitième siècle', published in 1847), they consist of an 'Avertissement' by Gustave Degérando (*Hist. comp.*², II/1, pp. I-XII) and 26 chapters; the 'Table des matières' is placed at the end of each volume.

In the 'Avertissement' Gustave informs the reader that his father, whose time was completely taken up by his philanthropic and pedagogical work, had been able to begin the 'Histoire de la philosophie moderne' only after 1827. When he died (1842) the new version was completed, except for the chapter on Scottish philosophy and Kant, which were taken from the text of the first edition. Gustave recalls the independence of thought shown by his father, defends him against the accusation of his "supposed adherence to Condillac", and quotes in full a note dated July 1827, in which Joseph-Marie remarks emphatically on his historiographical work: "This work is related to my aim in life: it fundamentally concerns the search for and the propagation of the true and the good and their alliance. Is it not the science of wisdom that presides over this alliance? [...] And is there any essential foundation of this science apart from the study of our [cognitive] faculties? Is it possible to illuminate its principles with a greater and more certain light than that emanated by a survey [*tableau*] of the path followed by the human mind? [...] I have been permitted to be one of the rings of the long golden chain that transmits the store of human knowledge through the ages" (*Hist. comp.*², II/1, pp. v and VIII).

The evident disproportion between the first and the second edition of the *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie* is due above all to the need to give more space to ancient, medieval, and Renaissance philosophy, which in the first edition had been rather restricted compared with that for modern philosophy; in writing the new edition, Degérando undoubtedly adapted himself even more to the model of the great general histories written by Buhle, Tennemann, and above all Tiedemann

(from whom he largely derived his treatment of medieval thought).¹¹ Nevertheless, as we have seen, the theoretical framework outlined in the ‘Introduction’ remains unchanged, and it is therefore unnecessary to reserve a separate commentary here to the second edition, which is basically characterised by the great amount of information offered to French speaking readers. We can also note the revival of writers who had been briefly discussed in the first edition or were totally absent from it. This is the case of Giambattista Vico, who was not even mentioned in the few pages devoted to Italian thinkers included in an appendix to the chapter on the evolution of empiricism in France and England (*Hist. comp.*¹, I, pp. 398–401); here on the other hand, he now becomes the object of a laudatory description, with passages cited from his *Autobiography* and the *New Science*, within the context of a separate and lengthy chapter entitled ‘De l’état de la philosophie dans le midi de l’Europe pendant le cours du XVIIIe siècle’ (*Hist. comp.*², II/4, pp. 141–158). Degérando’s attention to Vico’s doctrines was probably the result of the great emphasis given to the Neapolitan thinker in France by Jules Michelet.

4.1.4.2 Degérando gives considerable importance to the periodisation, taking up the traditional frameworks with the aim of finding a chronological equivalent to his nomenclature of systems. In the initial chapter (*Hist. comp.*¹, I, pp. 14–24), he distinguishes between five great “periods” in the history of thought, starting from sixth-century Greece, where “thanks to a brilliant early revolution, philosophy started to take a systematic form”, whereas the “opinions of the ancient sages of Asia, Phoenicia, Egypt [...] appeared to rest on an instinct of belief rather than critical analysis” and were alien to “first philosophy”, that is to say, to gnoseology.

The first period is that of Solon, Thales, and Pythagoras, and embraces the two centuries up to Anaxagoras; it is divided into the two great schools, the Ionic and the Italic (the latter of which is in turn subdivided into four schools) and is characterised by a series of audacious and original attempts as a result of “a general ferment reigning in minds”. This period is dominated by “hypotheses” which address the search for “the principles of human knowledge in the *nature of things* and in their primitive elements”.

Socrates’ teaching and death inaugurate the second period, which lasts four centuries and consists of nine distinct schools: seven of them derive from Socrates, the other two are Stoicism and the Academy (Middle and New). It is in this period that

¹¹ Among the chapters completely rewritten in the second edition of the *Histoire comparée*, we must mention the one on Alexandrian philosophy, which was the result of Degérando’s direct and repeated reading of the *Enneads* and other Neoplatonic texts, even though he declared that he had before his eyes the accounts written by Tiedemann (which he defines as a “model of certainty and method”), Buhle, and Tennemann. He also used the very recent edition of Proclus’ works prepared by Cousin, with whom he had been on friendly and fruitful terms, although he criticized this edition for lacking a “good Latin translation” and an apparatus of notes (*Hist. comp.*², I/3, pp. 465 and 474–476). The reasons for this particular interest in Neoplatonism (on whose “intrinsic value” Degérando totally disagrees with Cousin) lay in the “orientation philosophy has taken in certain schools in Germany” and in some texts recently published in France by certain scholars (I/3, p. 149).

Greek thought reached its climax, spreading to Rome too; ideas become more well-ordered, “philosophy becomes a real science and illuminates all the sciences”. Principles are now sought “in the very *nature of science*; the human mind reflects upon itself; meditation presides over the formation of theories”.

The beginning of the third period coincides with the supremacy of the Roman domination of the entire ancient world and the end of Greek independence. “For seven or eight centuries philosophy has little to say except her misfortunes”, and takes refuge in illumination and ecstasy: “systems originate from contemplative enthusiasm and bear all its features”. Four schools flourish in this period: the Gnostics, the Eclectics of Alexandria (from Potamon to Plotinus), the Jewish doctors, and the doctors of the Church.

In the ninth century, the progress made by the Arab Caliphate and the birth of the Holy Roman Empire coincided with the beginning of the fourth period, during which philosophy took various directions: the Arabs followed Aristotle, the Eastern Christians inherited Alexandrian syncretism, and the Christians of the West commented on the works of Boethius and Cassiodorus. The eleventh century was marked by the birth of Scholastic philosophy, which was characterised by dialectic, by “too blind imitation, indefatigable research, subtle questions, successive but slow progress”. The source of all knowledge lays “in axioms, in general notions, and in the formulas expressing their relations”. Scholasticism, in which the two sects of the Realists and the Nominalists originated, was later to give rise to several adversaries: Petrarch in moral philosophy; Lorenzo Valla, Cardano, Giordano Bruno, and Campanella in “rational philosophy”; and Vives, Montaigne, and Petrus Ramus in logic and dialectic. Beside these “reformers” of philosophy, who tried to open up new routes, there were some “more or less successful restorers of the ancient doctrines”, whom Degérando merely lists because “this resurgence of the ancient schools, which would deserve ample space in a general history of philosophy [an evident allusion to Brucker], must be granted a merely incidental role within our framework” (I, p. 22).

We come to the fifth and final period. The epochal events of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, from the invention of printing to the Protestant Reformation (note that in these pages Degérando never mentions either the “rebirth of letters” or the fall of Byzantium) run parallel to the “collapse of the old edifice of Scholastic philosophy” and a “universal revolution in ideas”. Progression takes place at random, urged on by the “anxious restlessness” that usually accompanies “an almost abrupt awakening”, up until the appearance of Bacon, who “demarcates the path of reason and the destinies of science and whose followers include the greatest geniuses who have brought honour to the modern age”. In this period, the principles of human knowledge were derived from “observation” and “reflection”, and philosophy took on the characteristics of an “art of methods” (II, pp. 17–18).

The fifth period is divided into three great schools led by Bacon, Descartes, and Leibniz. Degérando distinguishes between Bacon’s “legitimate school” (Locke, d’Alembert, Condillac, Bonnet, Thomas Reid, and the Scottish school) and two doctrinal positions that are similar but divergent, albeit in an opposite sense: that of Hobbes and Helvétius, and that of Berkeley and Hume. Bacon’s introduction into

Germany took place thanks to Jacob Thomasius and Tschirnhausen. Descartes too had a number of faithful pupils, above all Clauberg; but Spinoza (who drew “unexpected conclusions” from some Cartesian principles) and Malebranche departed from him. As for Leibniz, his “seeds” were developed with great success by Wolff. This school gave rise to Kant, who “attempted a great reform”; his school in turn split up into several “sects” (I, pp. 23–24).

Besides this traditional periodization, which serves as a frame to the first part of the *Histoire comparée*, at the beginning of the second part, Degérando repeatedly uses a framework which is part periodization and part classification and is taken from fundamental positions regarding the principles of knowledge. From this point of view, the “first epoch of the human mind” is characterized by the “passive exercise of the external senses”, namely, a “gross empiricism” governed by the instinct. Very soon, however, imagination intervenes and man starts to search within himself, “to know or at least to suspect the existence of this internal sense that moves his intelligence”. During this second epoch the first poets and legislators appeared, while the need to reduce the multiplicity of phenomena to unity gave rise to the first “abstract and general ideas” and therefore to the first “cosmological systems”; and here we have Thales and the first Ionic school (II, pp. 356–357).

A “new era” of philosophy started with Anaxagoras, who “grants reason a domain separate and superior to the senses”, thus paving the way for “analysis” and logic. This was the origin of the competition between rationalism and empiricism: Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, and Euclid “abandon the deceptive testimony of the senses”, renounce experience, and seek recourse to “lively imagination” and “subtle dialectic”; the Alexandria Mystics, then the Theosophers and the Cabbalists took up this doctrine, which had almost disappeared, and “invigorate it with a new enthusiasm”; Giovanni Pico, Rudolph Agricola, Giordano Bruno, Cardano, Henry More, and Cudworth “extend this chain up to Spinoza, who still lives again today in several sects in Germany”. As for the other trend, the defence of the senses was entrusted to Protagoras, Aristippus, and Epicurus; later on it was taken up again by Campanella, and finally found new impetus thanks to Hobbes, Helvétius, and Rüdiger. Hume and Hartley too expressed themselves in favour of it (II, pp. 358–359).

The recurrent contrast between rationalists and empiricists engendered the relativism of the Sophists and some recent “German sects” on the one hand (for Degérando this is a confirmation of the principle whereby “in philosophy as well as in physics, the return of the same causes produces the same effects”: II, p. 363 footnote); on the other, it gave free run to Scepticism, “whose effects are initially beneficial” because they bring into question the current philosophical systems and pave the way for new systems. This is the case of Pyrrho, who destroyed the Eleatic doctrines thus paving the way for Stoicism; Montaigne, who struck Scholasticism and gave way to Bacon and Gassendi; and Bayle, whose “negative philosophy gave rise to problems which were solved by Locke, Leibniz, and Condillac”. Moreover, by opposing experience with reason, Scepticism induced some to envisage a possible reconciliation between these two “rival authorities”. “This idea, which was held by both Hippocrates and Socrates [the footnote contains a reference to the

Theaetetus], opened up a completely new path to philosophers which was almost unanimously followed, developed, or modified by their successors". This is the "philosophy of experience", for which the senses provide the first elements of truth that are subsequently combined and revised by reason. This line of thinking, according to Degérando, was followed by both Aristotle and the Stoics, then by Ockham, Bacon, Gassendi, Locke, Condillac, d'Alembert, Thomasius, and Tschirnhausen (II, pp. 364–365).

The "philosophy of experience" is opposed to *philosophie spéculative*, which is based on truths that are evident in themselves and necessary. Foreseen by Anaxagoras, this position found its "interpreter" in Plato and reappeared in the Eleatics and Aristotle himself, who with his logic and metaphysics "seems to forget the successful results he owed to experience, while [on the contrary] he gave all his support to speculation". In his wake, the Arabs and the Scholastics professed "a blind respect for his axioms and for abstract nomenclatures", mistaking syllogisms for a science. But, establishing a rather unusual association, probably as the result of their common role as "reformers", Degérando here mentions Petrarch and Melancthon, who "surround speculative philosophy with purer lights and more successful applications". Then Descartes and Leibniz "deliver it from any hint of servile spirit, imparting it with the characteristics of audacity and novelty which make it possible to link it to the most brilliant experiments; the mathematical sciences seem to support its cause; some hypotheses elaborated by genius and confirmed at times by observation envelop it with great prestige. We are surprised to see Hobbes himself adopt speculative methods too, taking as his starting point either assumptions or abstract maxims, although he had professed opposite principles. In England, Clarke and Berkeley counterbalanced Locke's authority. Finally, in Germany, Kant proposed a new treaty between the senses and reason, in which the senses define the boundary of knowledge and reason keeps its prerogative with respect to the formation of knowledge itself" (II, pp. 368–369).

4.1.4.3 Some of Degérando's historiographical theories have already emerged from the general survey outlined above. We can now look at these theories in more detail and extend them, starting from the theme of the "origins", a theme which all those who wrote a general history of philosophy had to grapple with. From the perspective of the *histoire de l'homme*, Degérando places the theme on a psychological and epistemological rather than a historical basis. Indeed, he starts from the mental experiment – put forward by several eighteenth-century writers, Buffon in particular – of the man who loses all memory of the past while he is asleep and awakes under the impression that he has just come into the world. For Degérando, this hypothesis is not completely valid for the generation of ideas but it "can help us to realise what kind of interests and reasons might have led early thinkers to the study of philosophy". Confronted for the first time with the creation, this hypothetical man is astonished and feels admiration, but is unable to go beyond contemplation because he does not yet possess a sense of space and time and therefore does not know that objects can change their states and forms, nor can he imagine that something else exists beyond the horizon of his life. Very soon, however, he perceives

changes around him and wonders what produces them and whether they are foreseeable or not. So there originates the idea of cause and effect which brings him to partial, and hence unsatisfactory, knowledge; a further step leads him to join these separate explanations in a chain, until he can find "a first law serving as a foundation for all the others; he then thinks he has completed the system of his knowledge" (I, pp. 76).

At this point, a second phase begins. Man diverts his mind from that which surrounds him and turns it within himself, thus discovering new mysteries and new contrasts and asking himself new questions: "Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going?". He therefore examines his cognitive relationship with external nature, which now appears problematic to him, and asks himself: "Are these pieces of knowledge dream or reality? Who gives me the right, from this imperceptible point I occupy in the immensity of space, to extend the dominion of my statements over that which is outside myself and before myself as well as over that which will be? What therefore are the prerogatives of this sublime monad which, in myself, becomes representative of the universe?". Here the parallel with the history of philosophy appears: the reflections which would rapidly follow one another in the mind of this man "depict, in a perceptible and abbreviated form, the birth and progress of philosophy in the human mind, except that a single instant in the series of the reflections produced by this individual corresponds to a century in the history of peoples" (I, p. 78).

True to his theoretical framework, Degérando declares that the birth of philosophy is no fortuitous event, because "it takes its beginning from the very nature of man, it arises from the very laws of his intellectual faculties". Just as the senses and the imagination are the first faculties to develop in man, so the cosmogonies created by the Chaldeans, the Phoenicians, and the Hindus initiated the historical journey of philosophy, until some abstract notions were formed and they originated the first systems, which were at first founded on the soul of the world as the only cause of reality, and then, in a more mature phase, on the separation of the intellect from matter. According to Degérando, the thoughts elaborated by the ancient peoples of the East and Greek mythology (Orpheus, Homer, Hesiod, the gnomic poets) have nine general features in common: 1. The use of hypotheses to explain the generation of the world and the first origin of the human species; 2. The personification of the laws of nature; 3. The belief in geniuses and demons; 4. Recourse to supernatural causes to explain the extraordinary events of nature; 5. The tradition of the golden age and the age of the Flood; 6. An agreement between philosophical and religious opinions; 7. A special interest in astronomy; 8. The elaboration, usually in the form of apologues, of maxims to guide practical behaviour, which, in Degérando's words, constitute the best part of these doctrines; 9. The existence of a sacred language, an esoteric doctrine, a priestly caste, and initiation ceremonies (I, p. 90).

In Greece, with the rise of the Ionic school, the transition from the ancient poetic cosmogonies to "physics" is linked to the "federative system" and the political freedom enjoyed by the Hellenic cities. Indeed, this gives rise to the idea of order and "law", which is applied to the whole cosmos: "How deep is the philosophy implied

by the legislations laid down by Lycurgus and Solon! They reawakened the genius of the Cosmo-physicists, who tried to pierce the secret of the great legislation of the universe" (I, p. 91). Thales aimed at "explaining nature with nature", while Anaximander was the first to try and formulate an abstraction with his idea of "infinite", which was, however, still related to a material dimension. As we have already seen, special emphasis is laid on Anaxagoras, who initiated "real physics" based on the observation of nature; he was the first to recognise that the movement of matter is due to a cause foreign to matter itself and discovered that sensations are subjective and must be guided by reason which, without the data provided by the senses, however, is "obscure and uncertain" (I, p. 95).

Pythagoras was a match for Anaxagoras, and his intuition that "mathematical truths can lead to the knowledge of real things" constitutes "the prelude to one of the most brilliant methods adopted by the moderns", even though he later misused mathematics, to the point of believing that it could provide "the code of the legislation of the universe". Hence metaphysics was born, as an aspiration to "make the principles of things emerge from rational combinations alone" (I, p. 99). A third outstanding figure besides Anaxagoras and Pythagoras is Heraclitus, who is unjustly underestimated, in the eyes of Degérando, who credits him with having been the first to put forward "systematic doubt". Heraclitus too emphasised the relative nature of our sensations attributing the "universal intellect" ("divine reason spreading to all thinking beings") with the ability to grasp the truth. In this way, he "paves the way for mystical doctrines", but by giving prominence to memory (which preserves for us the "representation of the path of the universe") he also plants "the first seed of the philosophy of experience, albeit highly unformed". Not by chance was Heraclitus the master of Hippocrates, who, among the ancients, best applied the "experimental methods", turning, like Bacon, to "experience guided by reason" (I, p. 106; in the footnote Degérando mentions in particular two works by Cabanis in which Hippocrates' thought is "explained better").

The attention Degérando gives to the "system of absolute identity", that is to say, the school of Elea, is justified by the reappearance of this system in "original thinkers" like Giordano Bruno, Spinoza and, "finally, in some foreign philosophers", that is, the German philosophers. Unlike Thales, the Eleatics tried to give a reason for things and found it "only in the powers of thought", but more methodically than the Pythagoreans. Contrasting the senses with reason and finding himself unable to solve this contradiction, Xenophanes fell into scepticism, whereas Parmenides chose reason unequivocally and declared that "everything the intellect conceives of, *is* something; that which is something is real: that which *is nothing* cannot be conceived of". So there appeared for the first time "a misunderstanding which was to recur frequently, thus provoking almost all the mistakes of metaphysics"; it consisted in "confusing the use of the word *be* in identical propositions of rational logic with the value it takes when it expresses real existence. Hence, speaking of the principle '*that which is, is*', Parmenides easily stated that everything that *is*, is *identical*", thus arriving at one, eternal, and immutable substance (I, p. 113, italics in the text). This position was later developed by Zeno, who introduced logic; but this discipline was prejudiced by the use of rational truths alone and therefore by the

exclusion of the "judgments of fact". This is a "radical error" that reappears in Aristotle and his followers up to modern times. On the other hand, the misuse of paradoxes to the detriment of common sense favoured the strengthening of the Sophists, who "were essentially rhetors", and subjugated philosophy to practical interests, thus spreading relativism.

Yet, not all Eleatics took the road which started from absolute rationalism and came to doubt everything. Indeed, there were "physical Eleatics", like Leucippus, who tried to reconcile the multiplicity of experience with the unity of reason, but his atomistic cosmogony is defined as "absurd". On the other hand, Democritus' theory of sensation (that is to say, the *idola* emanating from things) seems "curious": by only granting full reality to atoms (which cannot be perceived by the senses, however), Democritus fell back into the rationalism of the "metaphysical Eleatics". As for Empedocles, he combined all these doctrines together, contradicting himself, but his "analysis of sensations" is considered to be "more exact and more exhaustive" than that elaborated by Democritus. In conclusion, "the whole system of the physical Eleatics is nothing but the continuation of Pythagoras' ideas taken to a more material condition. In these two systems *unity* is the *principle of things*; everything derives from it through the laws of combination. These two systems are one to the other as geometry is to mechanics" (I, p. 127).

We have lingered over Degérando's theories of the pre-Socratics because this first period lies "at the origin of all systems" (I, p. 91). This variety is dominated by a great confusion of ideas, while the "captious dialectic" led to a deterioration of philosophy. It was necessary to introduce a "general reform"; this was the job of Socrates, and it did not only concern morals, but also the theory of knowledge. Socratic reform is summarised and subdivided into four points: a) it was necessary to lead philosophy back to its true purpose, the perfecting of man, establishing a close connection between theory and practice; b) after eliminating all "advance opinions" by means of doubt, it was necessary to place "the first source of science [...] in self-knowledge", submitting all opinions to the "inner court of the conscience" (in this sense, Socrates is defined as "the first author of the philosophy of common sense"); c) it was necessary to give authority back to experience, which has "meditation" as its "natural companion" (from this point of view, the method followed by Socrates was nothing but "philosophical analysis in the form of a dialogue"); d) before starting to build philosophical systems, it was necessary "to draw the limits and the outline of the true domain of the *science de l'homme*", excluding issues such as "the nature of things and the origin of the universe", which cannot be solved; hence "philosophy, once retrieved from the dark areas into which it had thrown itself, was given by Socrates a new function, that of studying human nature, its results, and its needs" (I, p. 132). An up-to-date Socrates is created, therefore, seen as the first great representative of a *philosophie de l'expérience*.

We come now to Socrates' most famous disciple, Plato, whose intellect and refinement Degérando exalts, against those who "dare to judge this philosopher lightly", a philosophy to whom the great Cicero had paid homage, and who, during the modern age, acted "as a guide" to Clarke, Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant (I, p. 136). "He is frequently cited but just as frequently distorted or interpreted

arbitrarily”, so Degérando prefers to let him speak directly, quoting from the *editio Bipontina* in 12 volumes (Zweibrücken, 1781–1787) a long series of passages concerning the theory of knowledge (I, pp. 137–138 [*sic*, in reality 137–154: it is to be noted that, after page 144, the numbering of pages of volume I is wrong; the correct numbering is obtained by adding 16 to the printed page numbers]). This anthological presentation is followed by some overall considerations: asserting that the object of philosophy is the “world of intelligibles”, Plato was not able to obtain good results in the physical sciences, and indeed “his cosmology is nothing other than a hypothesis embellished with the name of metaphysics”. On the contrary, his “chief concern” was morals, which constitutes “the soul of his philosophy”, and it is precisely in this field that he was able to apply his method successfully, deriving the rules of human actions from archetypal ideas. However, morals too, especially when applied, needs “the help of experimental methods”, which were instead neglected by Plato. He “frequently exposed [morals] to the illusions of enthusiasm, just as he exposed philosophy itself to the exaggerations of dogmatism”, a position Arcesilaus was later to reverse to an “almost absolute scepticism” (I, pp. 139–140 [in reality 155–156]).

The appearance of Aristotle might seem to be the climax and the decisive moment of the journey outlined so far. “The human mind”, observes Degérando with a certain emphasis, “seemed to have examined all the philosophical combinations, when a sage finally appeared capable of appreciating all these attempts and collecting, determining, and classifying such a large number of scattered and confused ideas”, thanks too to his “calm, accurate, and methodical mind”. But there are also less positive aspects: “The code of precepts with which he gave human reason assured him long lasting authority over the centuries. But legitimate respect tended to be confused with blind obedience; his doctrine, obscure in itself, became even more obscure because of the flaws, the foreign mixtures, and the confusion introduced into his orderly writings. His methods have been misused and confused with his systems” (I, pp. 143–144 [in reality 159–160: so below]). The departure from Plato’s innate ideas represents “the key” to the whole Aristotelian system on the generation of knowledge, which is also described using a series of quotations taken from the *De anima* and the logical works; but Degérando also confronts contemporary historiography, quoting the *Geschichte der Lehre von der Association der Ideen* (1777) by Michael Hissmann (on which cf. *Models*, III, pp. 520–524 and 543–544), observing that Buhle, like a good Kantian, “very reasonably pointed out the differences between Aristotle’s categories and Kant’s categories; but he did not dwell on certain analogies which are not destroyed at all by these differences” (I, pp. 146 and 149–150 [162 and 165–166]).

After having illustrated the “history of the generation of ideas” in Aristotle, Degérando applies the general framework at the basis of his work to the “system of the logical generation of knowledge” in Aristotle’s thought, that is to say, to the order in which they are arranged and the “principle of their certainty”. Here, according to Degérando, it becomes more difficult “to make Aristotle agree with himself”, owing to the gap between: a) his personal method of research; b) his “general rules for the demonstration of truth”, that is, logic; and c) his metaphysical doctrine.

From the first point of view, Aristotle's method of proceeding looks exemplary, because he does not start "from vague speculation" but "collects, compares, discusses, and analyses all the systems emerging from the different schools; he becomes the first historian of philosophy; a sort of experimental logic originates; he arranges [in an orderly way] all the materials that may be useful to draw a picture of the progress made by the human mind". This same way of proceeding – which in Degérando's eyes clearly foreshadows the analytic method of "experimental philosophy" – is used in the study of morals and politics, far from any excess and any sort of "enthusiasm". Indeed, before elaborating his political theories, Aristotle takes care to collect and compare the various constitutions. "He wished to be the historian of nations before becoming their legislator: in this he greatly differs from Plato because he constantly views men as they are rather than as they should be; [...] and if he commits an error, his fault is that he justifies the existing conditions (*ce qui est établi*) too quickly, such as when he undertakes an apology of slavery". Similarly, in the study of natural reality, Aristotle's objective was a "science of facts" and not of abstract speculations: "Following a path totally contrary [to that of the ancient philosophers], he observes facts and classifies them; in the wake of Hippocrates, he continues the history of nature; he divides into kingdoms and genera; he establishes nomenclatures, founding them on the real properties of objects. Aristotle was the Pliny of Greece, the Linnaeus of Antiquity" (I, pp. 154–156 [170–172]).

Let us come to the second point of view. With the works before him, Degérando goes over the fundamental moments of Aristotelian logic (in particular the syllogism) and observes that the Stagirite indulges too much in "that need for regularity and symmetry, that respect for forms we have already identified in him. His conception is full of genius, but he resembles Pascal when he creates a machine in order to perform the four operations of arithmetic; in some way, he took on the task of thinking on behalf of all of mankind: a role for which too many arguers have contested him". However, *reasoning* does not contain the "source of truth" in itself, but constitutes only "the channel destined to guide it and keep it pure and intact", while *method* has the task of indicating the place where it can be found. Now, in conformity with the principles of his logic, Aristotle preferred the deductive method to the inductive one and defined science as "the knowledge of objects according to their necessary characters" and philosophy as "the science of the principles serving to establish these characters", restricting the means by which truth can be discovered to categories alone. As for the "multitude of truths" that are present in common usage but cannot be deduced from these necessary principles, they fall into the domain of probability and are the object of dialectic, whose theoretical premises, however, Aristotle does not examine in depth (I, pp. 160–163 [176–179]).

We come now to the third point of view, that of metaphysics, in which Aristotle shows he is unable to depart from the systems of his contemporaries and free himself of dogmatism. Here Degérando's judgement, which had been critical of logic, becomes decidedly negative, because the Greek philosopher "confused the great and mysterious *fact* of *existence* with the judgement man formulates on it. He therefore assumed that the general, the universal, is placed ahead of the singular in the order of certainty. He assumed that the highest abstractions attained by the mind are

also the first origin of realities. He accorded an objective value to those simple logical laws he had established for thought. It seemed to him that definitions explained the very nature of things. He hoped to pierce the essence of beings and what they are in themselves; he seemed to make them the object of science. In a word, thinking that the elements of his own conceptions corresponded in some way to as many primitive elements of beings, he passed, abruptly and inadvertently, from merely ideal regions to the land of positive things" (I, pp. 165–166 [181–182], italics in the text).

The erroneous consequences of this metaphysical perspective occurred above all in the field of "general physics", which Aristotle based on three principles: matter, form, and privation (and here, Degérando observes: "Here he remained at least consistent with himself, because he contented himself with granting reality to the ultimate abstractions of our ideas"). Although he qualifies the Aristotelian doctrines as "arbitrary systems", Degérando does not condemn them absolutely; on the contrary, he tries to soften his judgement, observing that Aristotle, "such a prudent and wise mind, seems to enter into these obscure paths with regret, almost considering the efforts he makes as mere attempts". Moreover, the Greek philosopher rejects those metaphysical principles which bear no relation with experience and he was the first to criticise the "mania for generalising". In conclusion, he "proves to be torn between the opinions prevailing in his century and the natural instinct of his mind", although the ancient and modern Peripatetics were to take up the "less felicitous side" of his thought (I, pp. 169–170 [185–186]).

As proof of the advances made by the "spirit of observation" after Socrates, Degérando points out that, even though they were so different in their essential character and doctrinal results, two great post-Aristotelian schools agreed in admitting the "principle of experience". Indeed, Epicurus united Democritus' physics with the logic of the Cyrenaics, extending the latter to the point that he made it "the source of the generation of ideas" as well as "the principle of the generation of knowledge"; his morals was itself the outcome of the direct observation of the human beings rather than a philosophical meditation on human nature. As for Zeno of Citium, opposing both scepticism and false morals, he was the first to formulate the famous principle whereby nothing exists in the intellect which has not been enveloped in sense, thus excluding all *a priori* knowledge and replacing final causes with the *rationes seminales*, which were "at least more in accordance with the analogies derived from the generation of organic bodies" (I, p. 180 [196]).

After Carneades, the founder of the New Academy, for many centuries there was no really original philosophical system. Degérando draws a desolate picture of this period, during which moral decline was accompanied by the loss of political freedom in Greece and then in Rome and by the disappearance of any impulse which might stir philosophical creativity. Indeed, "the great number of systems which had been conceived of during the previous centuries seemed to extinguish all hope of discovering new ideas. It was necessary to study at such length to learn what others had thought that very little time was left to meditate on one's own. In short, philosophy felt she was possessed such a rich patrimony that she had little ambition to enlarge it with new conquests". It was in this period that eclecticism arose, or rather

syncretism, which “consists – from an excessive need to harmonise everything – in assembling and confusedly mixing into a whole the most heterogeneous elements of the various doctrines”, each of which offered “a certain degree of probability and some advantage” (I, pp. 182–184 [198–200]).

Standing out from this panorama is the figure of Lucianus of Samosata, who derided “the subtleties of dogmatism” and imparted a more rigorous character to his negative eclecticism, which “consists in confuting all mistakes rather than in associating all doctrines”. But it was above all Alexandria, “a meeting place for the Romans, the Greeks, and the Orientals”, which saw the flourishing of Pythagorean, Platonic, and Aristotelian eclecticism, from which “all the philosophers [like Epicurus, Zeno of Citium, and the Cyrenaics] who claimed the rights of experience and therefore would have hampered the development of speculative systems and mystical ecstasies” were excluded (I, p. 189 [205]). Three general features characterised the School of Alexandria: a) the substantiation of “abstract notions”, so that “the genealogical tree of ideas” serves as a “model for the general system of beings”; b) the introduction of a “hierarchy of intelligences” which inhabit the universe; and c) the possibility that these intelligences (or Aeons) communicate with one another and each of them tends to go back gradually to its source. Real science and real moral perfection can only be reached through ecstasy, which implies being released from the senses. Nevertheless, during the first three centuries “some traces of the spirit of observation” still remained which can be seen in “superior geniuses” like Pliny the Elder and the Younger, Galen, Ptolemy, Longinus, and Diogenes Laertius. “In his unsufficiently methodical and often inexact history, Diogenes presents to us a picture which, viewed as a whole at least, provides a clearly definite system of philosophical experiments” (I, p. 202 [218]).

The doctrines of the Jewish doctors, developed in the Talmud and the Cabbala, do not deserve the name philosophy because they are obscure, sterile, and arbitrary, even though they had a considerable hidden and subterranean influence. Degérando speaks explicitly of the “philosophy of the early Christians”, on the other hand, who drew on the school of Alexandria to a lesser extent, and gave “morals, which is the science of all men, back to its popular and simple character, thus banishing that fatal separation into a double teaching (esoteric and exoteric) which had so damaged the progress of the Enlightenment” (I, pp. 202–203 [218–219]). We can see an echo of the Christian *Aufklärung* in this judgement, and indeed Brucker is frequently mentioned in the pages devoted to the thought of the Fathers. Among the Fathers, the greatest emphasis is obviously given to Augustine, who separated the faculties of the soul into seven levels; the first level concerns the faculties that govern the “conservation and animation of the body; the second, sensation and generation; the third, memory and invention applied to the arts, sciences, and institutions; in the fourth degree, the soul starts to reign over the body through wisdom; in the fifth, it acts and watches over itself in order to preserve its peace and inner purity; in the sixth, it leans toward intellectual contemplation; and finally, in the seventh, it communicates directly with God and draws sublime knowledge from this light”. According to Augustine too, Plato’s ideas become real entities and the senses are the object of criticism, because the human soul is enlightened by God without any interposition.

Following Tiedemann, Degérando stresses that the procedure used by Augustine, which starts from doubt in order to affirm the existence of one's self, "paves the way for Descartes" (I, pp. 213–214 [229–230]).

The role played by the philosophy of the Arabs in the Latin West is emphasised, although the Greek doctrines ended up by being altered by their bad Arabic translation; however, the attempt to reconcile Plato (who "gratified the natural inclination of the Oriental peoples to contemplation and ecstasy") and Aristotle (who proposed a complete encyclopaedic system) strengthened a "dogmatic" view of Aristotle among the Arabs, at the expense of his personal tendency to experience. The Muslim philosophers who most arouse Degérando's interest are Avicenna and Abubacer (Ibn Tufayl). Avicenna had a decisive influence on Latin Scholastic philosophy and the analogies between the four orders of relations and "certain modern doctrines" inaugurated "that demonstration of the necessary being Clarke was to develop in modern times". As for Abubacer, however, Degérando laments the fact that his "mystical practices" – here he refers to the famous work *Philosophus autodidactus* whose Latin translation appeared in 1671 – precluded him from elaborating a "more exact system on the generation of knowledge", and "he got lost in the labyrinths of Ontology and became exhausted in creating a strange system of Idealism" (I, pp. 228–231 [244–247]). Averroes, on the other hand, is strongly criticised for having "distorted" Aristotle's doctrines in a Neoplatonic sense.

In the description of the Latin Middle Ages, Degérando gives greatest emphasis to the dispute on universals, which was particularly suited to the approach adopted by the *Histoire comparée* and the theoretical background of its author. Degérando thus restores the nominalism of Roscellinus and recognises that his merit consisted in considering the study of universals as a "pure question of grammar", based on words alone. He deplores the negative prejudice against the dispute which was still widespread in France and, on this matter, does not hesitate to criticise Condillac himself: "Is it not surprising that precisely Condillac, in his *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* and his *Histoire moderne*, yielded to this general prejudice, he who had renewed the maxim that "we think nothing but names" and had demonstrated that general notions are based on the signs of language and, therefore, should have discovered in the nominalists all the germs of his system?" (I, pp. 238–239 [254–255]).¹² Indeed, he observes later on, the dispute on universals has ancient roots and must be related to the fundamental question of the generation of ideas, that is, of "general notions", against which the major philosophers of the two last centuries have measured themselves and which is not yet concluded (I, pp. 240–241 [256–257]). The Scholastics can at most be reproached "for having

¹² Further on, Degérando further criticised Condillac's historiographical theories (pp. 270–271 [286–287]), more particularly regarding the influence (negative, he believed) exercised by the Greeks who had fled Byzantium. This is explained by the "excessive severity" Condillac had shown in judging the Greek philosophers, in particular Plato and Aristotle, who – according to Degérando – showed considerable analogies with the thought of Condillac himself, for example with regard to the origin of language and the "art of speaking". On Condillac's attitude to medieval thought and the Renaissance, see *Models*, III, pp. 154–157.

wrapped the question of universals in ridiculous forms and for having been unable to solve it using adequately judicious (*judicieux*) reasoning and to develop all its effects”. In particular, the nominalists did not have the vigour to oppose the principle whereby there is no other science than that of necessary – hence universal – things. In this way, they “not only wasted the fruit of their clever analysis” but also ended up by closing themselves in the least advantageous position; on the contrary, acknowledging that there is no science of that which is particular, they refused to grant reality to science itself [here understood in a modern sense], attributing it with only “a sort of conventional existence” and thus bringing discredit on their sect (I, pp. 244–245 [260–261]).

The dispute on universals diminished when, at the beginning of the third epoch of Scholasticism, Aristotle’s entire philosophy became known through the mediation of the Arabs and Albert the Great’s commentaries. Degérando observes that there were two “vitiated foundations” of later Scholasticism: in the domain of metaphysics, the principle that true science studies necessary and universal things; and in the domain of logic, the structuring of the method into principles, definitions, and syllogisms. These two foundations were used by the Scholastic commentators “to confirm the doctrines of Plato and the Alexandrians regarding the connection of our ideas with the system of beings”, thus providing a justification for all “speculative methods”. Duns Scotus, for example, “while admitting experimental truths, adds that these truths can derive their power only from a principle residing in the soul, a principle of generalization, which is the only one capable of giving them the character of certainty”. Here Degérando draws an audacious parallel with Kant: “In this idea, which involves – we have to admit – an extremely clever intuition (*aperçu*), do we not perceive a seed of Kant’s system?” (I, p. 256 [272]). As for Ockham, Degérando emphasises his attempt to reform philosophy through a revival of nominalism; the attempt was not successful because of the persecution that befell him, but he nevertheless, “surprises us both for the independence of his mind and the soundness of his thoughts”.¹³

At the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, a “concurrency of extraordinary circumstances” gave rise to “one of the most universal revolutions presented by the history of the human mind. [...] Everything is in ferment, and, together with an awareness of its strength, the human mind regains that creative power which had long slumbered”. These words were not pronounced by Hegel but by Degérando, who, nevertheless, makes it clear – as has already been observed – that “for a long time these new lights produced scholars and men of letters rather than thinkers”. Yet the criticisms which many formulated against Scholasticism induced philosophy to depart from theology and, “thanks to this divorce, to become

¹³ *Hist. comp.*¹, I, pp. 266–267 [282–283]: “Ockham rejects Duns Scotus’ abstractions and seeks truth in sense; he establishes vacuum, defines extension, determines with precision the value of universals; subordinates abstraction and reflection to sensible perception; points out that sensation is modified at the same time by external objects, the sense organs, and our individual activity; that it lasts by means of a residual vibration (*par un reste d’ébranlement*) after departing from an external object; in his eyes, imagination is an inner sensation”.

a profane discipline again". Credit for having brought back to the realm of philosophy that common sense which had long been excluded from it goes to two Frenchmen, Montaigne and Charron: one indicated the origin of our prejudices, the other placed "knowledge and self-improvement" at the centre of wisdom. Both, moreover, used doubt in order to defeat Scholastic dogmatism (I, pp. 274 and 277 [290–293]). But the really decisive reform concerned method. This reform was repeatedly attempted by a series of thinkers, in particular Campanella and Pierre de la Ramée; Campanella even "seemed to presage Condillac", because "he was the first to revive the forgotten rights of experience in all their force, showed the hollowness of metaphysics, developed a theory of the senses, and asserted that science must be nothing but a reasoned history (*histoire raisonnée*)" (I, pp. 280–281 [296–297]), where Degérando distances himself again from the judgement expressed by Condillac, who had considered Campanella a visionary).

After a number of vicissitudes, we thus come to the "three great reforms" carried out during the seventeenth century by Bacon in England, Descartes in France, and Leibniz in Germany; all three were "endowed with the most vast and fruitful genius and all three were authors of a complete and methodically ordered system". They had different starting points: "Bacon studies nature and refers everything to experience; Descartes shuts himself up in the sanctuary of meditation and draws everything from his own ideas; Leibniz places himself between the two and therefore tries to connect facts to principles, studies facts in order to explain them, and develops principles in order to make them fruitful". The result of their doctrines was also different, since Bacon's doctrine became widespread, while Cartesianism enjoyed an "ephemeral triumph", and Leibniz's thought "did not move from where its author had brought it". To sum up, we can say that Bacon teaches us to "know better", Descartes to "think better", and Leibniz to "deduce better" (I, pp. 284–285 [300–301]). Given these premises, it is not necessary to dwell on the thought of Bacon, who is emphatically defined as "the founder of a new era and the Aristotle of modern times". Degérando explicitly associates him with the progress made in the natural and physical sciences from Galileo to Newton, so much so that all the discoveries made during the last two centuries may be considered "a vast commentary on Bacon" (I, p. 297 [313]). His "real and legitimate philosophy" is based on an acknowledgement of the "dual" cognitive "relationship" (with external reality and with ourselves) which characterises human nature and which was to be studied in greater detail by Locke. The fact that this relationship was studied from one side alone, on the other hand, gave rise to both Idealism and Materialism, two concepts opposed to each other, but in fact "made to be united, like husband and wife who divorced too quickly and miss each other even when they exchange insults, secretly feeling an emptiness, even though they do not have the courage to get back together again" (I, pp. 299–300 [315–316]).

For Degérando, the flourishing, successful school of Bacon also contained Gassendi, "the French Bacon", the "first author of the new philosophy of the human mind", which was clearly anti-metaphysical. While criticising Condillac again, Degérando observes that Gassendi's adherence to Epicurean physics was shared by Bacon and was fully justified because, among all the systems of Antiquity, atomism

was the that which offered the greatest potential for the renewal of the philosophy of nature (I, p. 302 [318], where it is observed that “the authors of the *Encyclopédie* were the only ones who did justice to our Gassendi and gave a summary of his doctrines”). Voltaire’s description of Gassendi as a sceptic is also judged to be wrong, since “the purpose of Gassendi’s philosophy is to find the golden mean between *dogmatism*, which grounds it arbitrarily, and *scepticism*, which overturns it” (I, p. 306 [322]). He likewise rejects the juxtaposition of Gassendi and Hobbes’ doctrines, which was put forward by “some superficial minds” (I, p. 422 [438], where he refers to Brucker’s “judicious” observations).

The apologetic rehabilitation of Gassendi can be partially explained by national spirit, inspired by the intention to find a clear formulation of the *philosophie de l’expérience* and its rigorous epistemological structure on French soil, long before Condillac and even before Locke. This results in a reduction of the role played by Locke, who “found a path which had been previously indicated by Bacon and had already been trodden (*frayée*) by Gassendi”, whose doctrines were diffused in England by Walter Charleton (I, p. 309 [325]). Locke’s analysis of the human faculties is defined as “incomplete”, while the theory of the generation of ideas constitutes “the fundamental merit” of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. As for the question of the principles of knowledge, Locke distinguished himself for the “wisdom” with which he analysed the boundaries of our knowledge, but often appeared “incomplete and obscure”, and even contradicted himself when examining the object and means of knowledge (intuition, demonstration, sensation, and judgement), as had already been pointed out by Leibniz and, on a historiographical context, by Buhle (I, pp. 313–314 [329–330]). His attitude towards abstract truths, for example, was not univocal, and indeed he proposed the proof for the existence of God (based on “abstract maxims”) as a demonstrative model. In short, “refusing on one hand to admit the actual certainty of our sensations – while granting it only to the comparison of our ideas and therefore the law of identity – and denying all effectiveness and applicative value of identical propositions on the other, Locke must have felt rather embarrassed in establishing the reality of our knowledge. And in effect, this is the weakest part of his theory” (I, p. 318 [334]).

Degérando describes the spread and development of Bacon and Locke’s theories in Europe in detail, author by author, with particular reference to France, taking care “not to interrupt the chain of provenance of ideas” started by Gassendi and blocked for a long time by the hegemony of Cartesianism. The greatest point of this development was obviously Condillac, who “naturalised Locke’s doctrine in France” and refined it by associating it with Descartes’ method, “or rather with the spirit of this method” (I, pp. 338 and 348 [354 and 364]). Condillac’s merits become clear if we compare him with Locke’s gnoseology, but Degérando also presents his limits, as he had already done in his *Des signes et de l’art de penser*: hasty analysis and excessive simplification, resulting in “excessively absolute” or paradoxical positions; a tendency to reduce philosophy to mathematics; a certain confusion between methods; and the statement (in contrast with the premises) that “the whole of science can be related to only one identical proposition”. Rousseau also followed in Locke’s footsteps, although he was also influenced by Montaigne in the independence of

thought and the struggle against prejudice. On the whole, his moral thought is defined as eclectic, it shares some points with Shaftesbury and Hume, and appears to follow the Socratic method; but fundamentally he reveals himself to be a Platonist, because “he creates an ideal of his own and forgets his own concepts and turns this hypothetical notion into an absolute rule. This makes him not only forget that which exists but also that which is possible” (I, p. 354 [370]).

British thinkers also follow in the wake of Bacon and Locke, with a few exceptions (Clarke, Richard Price, Wollaston), starting with Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. Thomas Reid was important because he proposed a solution to “the fundamental problem Locke had left unresolved” and against which the philosophers had measured themselves in vain from Antiquity onwards: how can we be sure that our sensations and ideas correspond to real and external objects? The “new solution” attempted by Reid consisted in eliminating every “intermediary between objects and thought”, seeking instead “in the soul alone a means of effecting a more immediate and secret relationship”. Here we have natural instinct, or common sense, “this great law of reason, a sort of intellectual instinct that forces us to admit certain truths without allowing us to discuss their bases” and which was first formulated by Fénelon’s Cartesianism (I, pp. 384–385 [400–401]; II, p. 37). Degérando does not conceal the weak side of this theory,¹⁴ which was, however, improved by Dugald Stewart. Stewart explained the origin of the misuse of abstract principles – which Condillac had previously denounced – by referring to “that disposition of the mind which inclines too easily to bring back to the general notion some of those individual perceptions from which the mind strives to separate the general notion itself”. Here Degérando observes that it would have been better for Stewart, “trusting more his powers had used the same method and the same severity to go back to the earliest origins of knowledge. Then, perhaps, he would have made his doctrine more complete; he would not have put so much trust in certain opinions formulated by Reid, in particular the one that makes the union of effects and causes depend only on *natural instinct* (I, p. 393 [409], italics in the text).

Within the general framework of a “philosophy of experience” and the reconstruction of its history, an important place is given to those thinkers who attempted to simplify and unify, but also lay down some “absolute principles”, and who ended up by reducing the cognitive process to the act of pure sensation. This is the case of Hobbes, and Degérando distances himself here by denouncing in detail the weak points and the contradictions of his gnoseology: the difficulty, first of all, that arises in “explaining the operation by which the mind distinguishes, compares, and combines sensations”, on account of the fact that Hobbes believed that it was not possible to experience more than one sensation simultaneously; moreover, the fluctuation between an inclination to “materialise the entire domain of thought”, which appears to be the coherent outcome of his thought, and a “straight march

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 385 [401]: “We acknowledge, however, that Reid’s doctrine provided convenient refuge for those who, when establishing an opinion, wished to avoid justifying it by means of reasoning and responding in a rigorous way (*en forme*) to the objections raised by their adversaries. Beattie and Oswald seem to have fallen for the charm of this easy way of proceeding”.

towards Idealism” when, generalising the fact that colour, smell, and taste do not belong to objects, we consider all the accidents shown to us by the senses to be simple appearances (I, pp. 410–412 [426–428]). What is unclear in Hobbes is “the way in which we generalise the results of observation”, because he makes “general truths rest on unanimity and the perseverance of the conventions relating to the value of words”; but in this way “the science of facts is ultimately resolved into the science of words (*science des mots*)”, which produces a serious logical consequences when this attitude is applied to politics and ethics.¹⁵

In France, the characteristic defects of Hobbes manifested themselves even more intensely in Helvétius, a less profound but livelier and lighter mind, a real *homme d’esprit* rather than a *penseur*. Here Degérando observes that “Hobbes isolated himself in his concepts, whereas Helvétius remained outside himself”; his theory that action, for example, was motivated by crude personal interest and was in contrast to his personal inclination towards friendship and generosity (I, pp. 427–428 [443–444]). Among the “modern Eclectics” we find Diderot, who concerned himself with various subjects and drew on several sources, although he did not produce an organic set of doctrines and showed a certain proximity to Hobbes’ positions (I, p. 436 [452]; for Degérando’s critical judgement on Diderot as a historian of philosophy, cf. *Models*, III, pp. 34–35). Degérando believes that eclecticism “strictly speaking” found followers mainly in Germany, from Buddeus and Rüdiger up to Brucker, but – unlike Brucker himself – he is not inclined to define “truly original” thinkers like Bacon, Descartes, and Leibniz as eclectics.¹⁶

Coming to the “modern sceptics” (Huet, Glanvill, Bayle), Degérando observes that it was Bayle who prepared the “return of Idealism”, by taking up the criticism the Eleatics had aimed at the existence of matter and “reducing the only certain feature of sensation to the inner modification the soul receives from itself”. Against the principle of authority widely held at the time, Bayle subjected everything to his “universal criticism”, hitting “confusedly and with no limits; but he did not deprive philosophy of the hope of attaining the truth, but merely intensified the need to

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, p. 416 [432]: “From this it follows that, in his eyes, all moral rules turn into mere conventions, whose foundation is arbitrary and which can only be grounded in a public power”; see also p. 419, footnote: “Of interest is the fact that the first and perhaps the only philosopher who has defended the principle of ‘absolute power’ rigorously (*en forme*) is the same who severely deprived moral convictions of everything noble, comforting, and gentle for the heart they possess. Indeed, by degrading the nature of man we justify those who oppress it, and all generous feelings are closely related to one another. Hobbes suppresses all sorts of enthusiasms under an iron doctrine and subjects the moral world to necessity, just as he subjects society to power”.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, p. 442 [458], footnote. The reference to Germany, “this industrious nation, so rich in all sorts of materials and whose help we neglect”, gives Degérando the opportunity to express the wish for improved cultural relations between the two nations: “We will never sufficiently deplore the equally unjust reciprocal prejudices that raise a sort of barrier between French intellectuals (*littérateurs*) and German intellectuals. Given their different merits and defects, the most fruitful commerce and the most profitable exchange would seem to be destined to be established between them. In this commerce, the Germans would provide, as it were, the raw materials for the philosophical products, and the French would repay by providing the tools and manpower” (p. 439 [455], footnote).

demonstrate it with greater exactness. Rather than a regular system of Scepticism, his writings were a general appeal to reason, in order to better examine the principle of knowledge" (I, pp. 446–447 [462–463]). This appeal was answered by Berkeley, who radically doubted the ability commonly attributed to our sensations of being able to represent external reality, whereas, on the contrary, this does not originate from material bodies but from God's supreme intelligence. Berkeley's reasoning, successfully summarised by Degérando, was not the object of his criticism, except for the final observation of the clearly sceptical origin of this emblematic philosophical point of view. Berkeley fundamentally "avoids absolute Scepticism only by turning to the great metaphysical principle of the connection between effects and causes, and, with its help, by bringing the majestic image of the Being of beings back to the annihilated universe" (I, p. 456 [472]).

Berkeley's perspective is soon compared with that of Hume: "Berkeley had broken one of the two big chains linking man to the general system of beings; the other [the principle of causality] slipped out of Hume's hands". Despite his radical criticism of this principle, Hume wished to maintain a position of relative scepticism resulting "rather from prudence than from a system", and such as not to endanger the practical applications of philosophy, which were the main object of his interest. This is followed by an intellectual profile of the Scottish philosopher: "Hume did not find any particular reasoning which could possibly be opposed to Berkeley's system; but he did exert all the strength of the natural instinct that rejects that system as well as the practical absurdities it would entail. He found nothing which he could oppose to the proofs against the existence of bodies; [but] he could not refuse to assume this existence, even without any proof. In this battle between instinct and reason, he would have liked to have a judge [...] and he but appealed to one in vain, and from these contradictions he was able to deduce nothing but [...] the weakness of our minds and the uncertainty of the principles we consider to be most evident. In general, Hume had more finesse for grasping difficulties and good faith in admitting them than the strength to solve them. This inclination to judge truth by means of usefulness, this distance from arbitrary suppositions, the clarity in his ideas, which constantly distinguishes his mind, ended up by making him an enemy of all metaphysical theories" (I, pp. 457–458 [473–474]).

The struggle against all forms of apriorism was conducted by Hume on the basis of a clear distinction between judgements of fact and demonstrative judgements; this distinction – observes Degérando – is too clear cut and it excludes every fruitful combination and believes true demonstrations only belong to arithmetic and geometry, thus denying empirical data the possibility to generalize, in such a way as to deprive the relationship effect-cause of all validity. This leads to a "new confirmation of Idealism": once the principle of causality has vanished, "our sensations can consequently be nothing but mere appearances of phenomena, beyond which we are not allowed to go, and it is not even necessary to follow Berkeley and involve the intervention of the Author of nature". Degérando thus recognises Hume's merit of having defined with great accuracy, albeit without solving it, that problem of the "logical connection of knowledge" of which Locke had not been fully aware (I, p. 466 [482]). Nevertheless, Hume's "Idealism" is not exempt from traces of

Materialism, after the manner of Hobbes, since, to his mind, there is only a difference in intensity between idea and sensation, as Hobbes had already maintained (I, p. 468 [484]).

Let us move on to the other side of modern philosophy, where the predominant figures are Descartes and Leibniz. The historiographical theory starts to become particularly important here because the aim is to reconcile the image of Descartes as an antagonist of the successful duo of Bacon and Locke with the fact that he remains in some way the founder of modern philosophy. From this point of view, we should not underestimate the importance of patriotism and nationalism either, which make it inappropriate to create an excessively radical criticism of the most famous French philosopher. Degérando solves the problem with considerable ability thanks in part to his historiographical theories based on intellectual balance and thoughtfulness. In the first place, the appearance of Descartes on the historiographical scene is preceded, as a sort of *ouverture*, by a reference to the theoretical framework of the *Histoire comparée*: the two “main active faculties” of man are *analysis* and *combination*, which should proceed in a state of equilibrium, with the risk of falling into Scepticism or Dogmatism, respectively. Of these two faculties, however, the one that develops first is synthetic combination (or imagination), which aims at immediately building doctrinal edifices, whereas critical analysis is affirmed only “after long practice, especially after unhappy experiences” (II, pp. 1–3). This is what happened in ancient thought and also in more recent times, when the “revolution” brought about by Descartes had started from Dogmatism.

After justifying Descartes’ position both from a theoretical and a historical point of view, he comes to the central part of this ‘rescue operation’, which concerns the ‘system’. Here Degérando’s strategy is clear: his intention is to rescue everything that can be saved of Cartesian thought, from the methodical doubt (unjustly criticised by most modern philosophers, which can be traced back to Bacon’s principle of the dismissal of acquired opinions and the release from authority) to the rule of evidence and the practice of *méditation*, that is, the *conscience de la raison*, whose “laws” he established and which were then followed by all subsequent philosophers, albeit in a different form. Finally we come to “Descartes’ mistakes”, starting precisely with *méditation*, to which – due to his excessive mistrust of the senses and extreme admiration for mathematics – he wished to reduce science; here we find the exclusive role granted to the “*a priori* method, [to] synthesis, which starts from abstract axioms and moves on to particular truths: indeed, this method was particularly suited to the natural tendency of this mind, who was proud, resourceful, bold, a friend of systematic combinations, and jealous of the creative power they seem to lend the intellect, and therefore he filled the regions of science as he liked with new beings” (II, p. 17).

We thus come to innate ideas, which – unlike the description Locke made of them “in order to fight them better” – are not always present to our minds, as Descartes clearly explains in the third *Méditation*; however, compared with Plato, Descartes formulated the doctrine of innatism “in the least unreasonable” way (II, pp. 18–19). Tools elaborated by Descartes were therefore “for the most part good in themselves but not sufficient, especially for working on things which depend on

facts”, while he limited himself to establishing only one primary truth, the *cogito*, which he subsequently corroborated with the support of the existence of God; the latter is justified wrongfully, that is, by “transforming the *logical maxim* that the mind can *affirm of a thing all that which is enfolded in the idea of that thing* into a *metaphysical principle*” (II, p. 20, italics in the text). Having elegantly written off Descartes’ physical theories as “brilliant hypotheses” and noticing that his mistakes “could not withstand the method elaborated by Bacon for long”, Degérando completes his appreciation by listing the “precious truths” he left and observing that, despite the decline of his system, he still exercises, “not only in France but also in Europe, an invisible and secret rule, a beneficial rule, with which we comply without being aware of it. This rule consists above all in the effect produced by the general spirit of his doctrine, the eloquent appeal he made to human reason, [...] the custom he spread of reasoning on clear ideas” (II, pp. 22–25).

The multitude of Descartes’ followers includes Spinoza, whose system is extremely difficult because of its highly metaphysical nature and the “two best accounts” of it are by Tiedemann (cf. *Models*, III, pp. 894–897) and above all Jacobi in his *Letters Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*. Degérando also mentions the “detailed observations” on Spinoza’s system elaborated by Condillac in his *Traité des systèmes*, which, however, do not grasp the “true generation” of these doctrines. On the contrary, this origin lies in Spinoza’s attempt “to place himself between nothing and existence with the powers of reasoning alone; in his eyes, the original and mysterious fact of *existence* was nothing but a philosophical problem, and he dared to find the solution. Like that King of the Indies, he wondered ‘why something exists’, and he attempted to find an explanation *a priori*. Hence, that which distinctively characterises Spinoza’s approach is the fact that he wanted to bring the synthetic method into the first principle of the generation of causes. In these metaphysical spaces that he had created beyond all beings, he could only find *necessity* and *identity*. *Existence* had become for him the product of these laws and it bore their character; hence, everything that exists has been *identical* and *necessary*, and the Universe has offered nothing but one single substance, indivisible and infinite”. This is the consistent outcome of “synthetic Dogmatism”, except that – from an epistemological point of view – he then converted Idealism into a Materialism similar to that proposed by Hobbes (II, pp. 63–64 and 69–70; see also, on pp. 65–66, the discovery of the “key” and “true seed” of Spinoza’s metaphysical system in the fourth axiom and the third proposition of book I of his *Ethica*, where he explains the principle that “the same effects can only be produced by the same causes”).

Degérando does not spare his praise of Leibniz. The “Bacon of Germany” managed to merge “creative genius and erudition” in the highest degree, and thanks to his extraordinary intellectual breadth, devoid of all prejudice, “he represents in some way the whole history of philosophy; he shows us the tie that binds the ancients to one another and the ancients to the moderns” (II, pp. 73–74). The distinguishing feature of his *esprit* is his extraordinary ability to associate and reconcile harmoniously, with a focus on some “simple and fundamental ideas”, placing himself “between Plato’s Idealism and Democritus’ Mechanism; between Aristotle’s Dogmatism and the doubt of Sextus [Empiricus]; between the speculations

formulated by the Alexandrian mystics, the Cabbalists, and the Theosophists, and the synthetic theories elaborated by Descartes and Malebranche; his Eclecticism, the most enlightened form that ever existed, drew on the most opposite opinions, deriving from them a harmonic whole" (II, pp. 79–80). Leibniz therefore represents a true model for Degérando, who particular appreciates his "spirit of research and analysis" which led him, in every field of learning, to a fundamental principle, which in philosophy is identified with the principle of sufficient reason: this is precisely "the cause of all his discoveries, the opportunity for elaborating his hypotheses [such as that concerning pre-established harmony], and the synthesis of his opinions". Similarly, Leibniz's theory of the origin of ideas refers back to his "general opinion on the monad", according to which "while forming its ideas, the soul will derive everything exclusively from its own source, will owe everything to its own activity, and will be a sort of *spiritual automaton*" (II, pp. 81–82).

Leibniz's gnoseology and theory of language, as well as the metaphysical principles related to them, are illustrated with a long series of quotations, interspersed with barely critical observations, as though the gentle Degérando was too embarrassed to take sides against the great Leibniz, who, moreover, was the champion of eclecticism. "A sort of Idealism" is undoubtedly the position in which Leibniz finally found himself "trapped in" (this judgement, which in itself does not go too far, is substantiated with authoritative references to Tiedemann and Buhle). Indeed, while he recognized "experimental truths", Leibniz was not interested in demonstrating the existence of bodies and repeatedly affirmed that they are mere phenomena, while the word "substance" is only attributed to monads. But in this way "the whole of science disappears" and we "end up grasping only the relations between our inner conceptions, while we think we are studying the laws of the Universe". The two hypotheses concerning the pre-established harmony in the world and the "representative power" in our intellect, however, then re-establish a connection and a correlation between man and nature. Hence, in Leibniz, Idealism appears to be "modified and constrained" and should be traced back to his typical mental attitude, which induced him to "transfer the logical laws of thought into the absolute order of things" (II, pp. 103–106).

Degérando's interest in German philosophy, which is evident from the amount of space granted to the school of Leibniz, culminates with Kant, a writer whose fundamental position he does not share, but towards whom – as in the case of Leibniz – he expresses a strong interest, almost an attraction. At the end of the eighteenth century, it was easy to foresee the birth of a new philosophy, because in Germany, as Fülleborn had observed, the interest in "speculative doctrines" was intense but of short duration, and thus needed to be constantly renewed. However, the opposition on a European scale between the school of Leibniz and Wolff and the school of Bacon and Locke had reached such a point that a new and decisive "reform" was required. It was not easy to carry this out because in order to attract "the attention of a public always avid for new ideas" it was necessary to avoid solutions which had already been adopted. This was what Kant had to do, but the outcome was not as successful as it was hoped, since, by his excessive use of tools, the doctrine he elaborated became too complicated and too full of terms and classifications

requiring too much practice even from those who were “willing to admire without understanding, but wished at least to show they had understood” (II, p. 171).

Degérando intends to provide a “faithful account” of this doctrine, with the intention of being both “correct and intelligible”. It was not an easy task and he admitted to feeling “a sort of shyness”. In addition to a good part of Kant’s works (the three *Critiques*, the *Prolegomena*, the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, and *The Metaphysics of Morals*), his sources include some publications edited in Germany by Johannes Schulze, K.Christian Schmid, Kiesewetter, Fülleborn, and Reinhold, as well as “two comments handwritten by particularly enlightened supporters of Kant’s philosophy” (one of these is perhaps by Wilhelm von Humboldt: cf. Köster, *Joseph Marie Degérando*, p. 67, footnote). His opinion of Charles-François-Dominique de Villers’ work *Philosophie de Kant, ou Principes fondamentaux de la philosophie transcendente* (Metz, 1801) is very critical, even though the work long represented the prevalent gateway to Kantian “novelties” in France and in Italy.¹⁷

Degérando approaches Kant’s doctrines with both “repugnance” and “half-acceptance” (Baldensperger, *Le mouvement des idées dans l’émigration française*, II, pp. 270–271). Given the approach adopted by the *Histoire comparée*, the lengthy chapter on Kant focuses on the themes developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which is the object of a very detailed account (II, pp. 180–240); but space is also given over to the *Critique of Practical Reason*, whose innovating force is considerably played down and ultimately reduced to a “methodical apparatus”.¹⁸ As for the third *Critique*, it is explained in a few lines as it is considered to be a repetition of the two preceding *Critiques* which “adds nothing either to their respective principles or to their mutual connection” (II, p. 244). What emerges from the pages of the *Histoire comparée* therefore is a totally ‘academic’ Kant, quite different from the republican ‘Jacobin’ image which had been spread in 1796 by the circle of Sieyès.

The analysis of Kant’s system (which is taken up more critically in part II, in the chapter entitled ‘Considérations sur le Criticisme’: III, pp. 505–551) proceeds from

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, II, p. 179 footnote: “[Villers’ work] is of little help in studying Critical Philosophy; if his intention was to address superficial people, then his analysis is certainly too obscure; if he wished to address thinkers, then it is totally insufficient. I prefer to believe that if M. de Villers were to rewrite this work, he would make fewer affirmations, prove more, show more consideration for the opinions of others, and express his own [opinions] with more clarity”. According to Degérando, far better – although incomplete – is the essay by the Dutchman Hans Kinker, which had been translated into French by Jean Le Fèvre: *Essai d’une exposition succincte de la Critique de la raison pure* (Amsterdam, 1801).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 243–244: “Practical reason”, as Reinhold cleverly observes, “is therefore a wing that Kant prudently added to his building, having noticed its inadequacy. [...] Although Kantianism manifests its contempt for all sorts of popular philosophy, this perspective is in fact not far removed from the ordinary tendency typical of a great number of people who think it is impossible to reach an immediate confirmation of their opinion on primary religious ideas by means of reason alone, although they refer to them out of a sort of need, as though these ideas represented the support they need for their morals. In general, we can state that the power the school of Kant attributes to practical reason is fundamentally nothing other than the energy of a rather fanatical moral enthusiasm disguising itself as a methodical apparatus”.

his “intention to put an end to the three long wars that devastated the dominion of philosophy: the wars which were waged between Dogmatism and Scepticism, Rational theories and Experimental theories, and Idealism and Materialism” (II, pp. 180–181). Kant believed he had found a solution to this uninterrupted conflict between opposing principles by shifting the starting point, “by raising questions before the very principles of these doctrines”. Rather than taking sides in the battle between Scepticism and Dogmatism, Kant asked what it means “to know” and what the relationship this operation has with the knowing subject and the object which is known. Similarly, he placed himself beyond the dispute between rationalists and empiricists by asking *how* experience itself is possible and “according to which law we form a chain of observed phenomena, making them depend on one another”. Finally, when confronted with the war between Materialism and Idealism, he raised the problem of the distinction, in our ideas, between that which is provided by our minds and that which is given to us by external objects. In brief, the “legitimacy of our knowledge” represents the central core of critical philosophy, which has claimed the role of “supreme legislator” of our knowledge. Hence, Kant’s followers are given the “double merit” of having highlighted several essential problems and formulated courageous solutions, but they also manifested “conceit and vanity”, a distrust for the “popular philosophy of common sense”, and a disdainful rejection of all criticism.¹⁹

It would take too long to go over the salient features of the analytical reconstruction and discussion of Kant’s gnoseology. We will limit ourselves here to the final considerations which refer to Kant’s “intention”: to answer the question of whether Kant succeeded in finding a middle way in the struggle between Dogmatism and Scepticism, Rationalism and Empiricism, and Idealism and Materialism, Degérando replies that, in reality, Kant adopted one of these different positions each time; consequently, “instead of tracing a direct line between contrary exaggerations, he followed the labyrinthine path he was forced to follow to incorporate these exaggerations into his system; in a word, the means he found to free himself of all the mistakes was to admit all the contradictions”, something unacceptable for Degérando, who is alien to every form of dialecticism (III, p. 545). We can then understand, Degérando insists, why a system designed as a means for making peace between the various philosophical sects gave rise in turn to a new series of disagreements between its followers. Reduced to a “amalgam of incompatible elements”, critical philosophy “has disguised (*déguisé*) itself as a multitude of divisions, classifications, definitions, distinctions, and all sorts of commentaries interwoven with these elements”, which draw the reader’s attention, pushing the internal contradictions into the

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 182–86. The lengthy final chapter of part I (II, pp. 245–336) is devoted to Kant’s “partisans” (and adversaries). Degérando makes it clear that this is not a true *tableau historique*, because this philosophy is too recent to allow the formulation of an “absolute and definitive judgement”. Furthermore, the fact that these writers are frequently obscure and the difficulty of finding their works in France makes it even more arduous “to provide some ideas on the present state of philosophy in Germany” (II, pp. 245–246). After an overall presentation, Degérando reviews the doctrines of Reinhold, Aenesidemus, Fichte, Schelling, Bouterwek, and Bardili.

background (“impressed by the rich embroidery, one does not notice the underlying defects”). Hence, in order to formulate a complete evaluation of Critical philosophy, we should not stop to discuss its propositions one by one but grasp it in its entirety, so as not to waste our efforts dealing with a “series of intermediaries which, distinction by distinction, make us lose sight both of the starting point and of the objective we suppose we are aiming at” (III, pp. 546–547).

These criticisms do not mean that Kant’s system just like all systems, does not contain some “seeds of truth”, which, however, owing to improper “extensions”, have been turned into as many mistakes. First of all, it is true that the human mind harbours “certain conditions and laws [...] which are applied to the objects of its knowledge. But these conditions are the faculties it is endowed with; and these laws are the methods necessary for the exercise of these faculties. Critical philosophy went further, since it assumed that these conditions are *intuitions, notions, ideas*, in short that they are *forms*, and not simply *powers*; it assumed that these laws are *principles*; this extension constituted its first mistake”. The second mistake concerns the notions of space and time, the categories and ideas of pure reason, which for Degérando are not an exclusive product of our minds but “ideas concerning *relation* or *reflection*”, and as such “manifest something real and independent of our minds: they are the *terms* of the relation, the *facts* that serve as objects of reflection”, otherwise we fall back into Cartesian and Leibnizian innatism. Finally, the third mistake consists in granting *a priori* truths the functions of “principle, guarantee, and support of the first experimental truths”; in this way, “by removing experience from the set of elementary and primitive data of the mind, Kant compelled himself to reassemble the reality of things, so to speak, a bit at a time [...] and to grant the simple conceptions of the mind, that is, *a priori* truths, with a value and a fruitfulness which do not belong to their nature” (III, pp. 548–550; italics in the text). The conclusion is now obvious: critical philosophy is useful because it showed us “the true needs of philosophy” as well as the inadequacy of the solutions attempted so far, thus indicating both its mistakes and the only possible way out, namely the *philosophie de l’expérience*.

4.1.4.4 Our analysis so far clearly shows the double-edged method (a *historical* account with a *theoretical* classification/discussion) that characterises the *Histoire comparée*. On one hand Degérando seems to advocate the historicization of the philosophers: “In order to be able to judge Descartes correctly, it is necessary above all to place him again in the age in which he lived; it is necessary to examine the spirit of his system rather than the elements it consists of [...]” (II, p. 6).²⁰ Moreover, although he does not give any biographical information (“This is certainly not a history of philosophers, but a history of philosophy, or at least a portion of this history”: I, p. 101; see also I, p. 20) Degérando shows that he is interested in the

²⁰ The same concept had been expressed, for example, regarding the difficulty of understanding the true sense of Pythagoras’ doctrines: a difficulty which can be perhaps overcome “by divesting ourselves of our ideas and identifying as much as possible with this mysterious and praiseworthy man” (I, p. 96).

connection between a philosopher’s personality and his doctrinal perspective (“the history of his life”, he writes referring again to Descartes, “is somehow the definition of his system”: II, p. 8).²¹

On the other hand, the structure borrowed from the natural sciences leads Degérando to view the various speculative positions as as many exemplary experiences.²² Since they have their own objectivity, or rather necessity, (indeed, as we have seen, “in philosophy as well as in physics, the return of the same causes produces the same effects”: II, p. 363, footnote), they must be subjected to a rigorous form of classification. Hence his frequent recourse to playing with *-isms*, in order to classify even extremely complex or blurred positions and make them ‘readable’. To give just one example among many, in Descartes, because of his way of proceeding, Idealism takes the character of an “inevitable system”, whereas Malebranche “brought *Idealism* much further than Descartes, and if we think about the fact that he believed ‘we possess no clear idea of nature or of the modifications of our souls’, we have to acknowledge that his system led him to a *Scepticism* which alarmed his religious faith and against which he appealed for the help of theological *Dogmatism*” (II, pp. 21 and 44–45, italics ours).

This inclination to conceptual concatenations sometimes results in a veritable *a priori* deduction regardless of the “facts” themselves, that is, from doctrines that are historically expressed. This is the case of Spinoza, whose conclusions would never have been recognised by Descartes, although they represent “the inevitable result of his [Descartes’] way of philosophising”. It is enough to join together the three great Cartesian principles (philosophy understood as a search for the first causes and the true principles; “the possibility to affirm about something all that which is enfolded in the idea of that thing”; and the idea of infinite), then add to this the ancient maxim *nihil ex nihilo*, and then “disregard every recognised fact and rigorously follow the deductions put forward by the combination of these principles, and you will surely have a rough version of the system of Spinoza, *even if you have never known it*” (II, p. 65, italics ours).

The *Histoire comparée* also reveals the equally unsteady position of a ‘history’ completely centred around gnoseology: it is the history of a limited but essential problem (the first archetype of works like Ernst Cassirer’s famous text *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*, for example) which, however, suggests that it is in some way embracing philosophical issues in their entirety and the entire family of philosophers. This aspiration to totality

²¹ Regarding Leibniz too, Degérando points out that, in most cases, the philosophers “involuntarily depict themselves in their systems and in their most abstract theories; they invest philosophy with the character of their inner inclinations and somehow adjust the nature of things to the trend of their own conceptions” (II, p. 76).

²² The study of Spinoza’s “system”, for example, is important not only because it shows the revival and refinement of several doctrines elaborated in Antiquity, but also (and above all) because it offers “a remarkable experience concerning the misuse of certain methods and the consequence arising from certain principles, since it reveals the limit of the path on which the human mind can lose itself when it abandons the path of observation” (II, pp. 62–63).

certainly comes from an established tradition of general histories of philosophy and is justified by the organic connections that, within a systematic view of philosophy, relate the different parts of a system to one another (as in the case of Hobbes' moral and political theories: I, pp. 418–419 [434–435]).

The risk of using an artificial nomenclature, vitiated by an excessively schematic approach, was obviously not far away. However, we have to admit that it is precisely thanks to his “uncertain Condillacianism” (to use Cousin's expression) and his eclecticism, that Degérando was able to avoid the crudest outcomes of his passion for nomenclature, which also affects his survey of those who wrote histories of philosophy (cf. I, p. 52). While using the language of a naturalist, he shows he was aware of the complexity of the human mind, as attested to in the biographies and the ‘praises’ of illustrious men. When, for example, he counts as Bacon's followers writers like Fontenelle (even though he had not managed to leave Cartesian physics behind him) or Antoine-Léonard Thomas, he observes that “those who refuse to recognise philosophy unless it is arid and covered in a whole apparatus of arguments, will perhaps be surprised to see that we have included the author of the *Pluralité des mondes* [Fontenelle] and the author of the *Essai sur les éloges* [Thomas] among those writers who have developed its cause most advantageously. However, since the science of the human mind – unlike that of our physical organs – cannot be taught by using models (because the facts we gather in ourselves remain too vague and uncertain and it is impossible to compare them with other facts of the same kind), we should be grateful to those who have written the history of the most distinguished minds and made us turn our eyes towards the most brilliant phenomena in this wonderful system of experiences. Their works are a sort of *natural history museum of the human mind*” (I, p. 362 [378], italics ours).

Degérando's interest methodology manifests itself clearly in the pages he devotes to the “duties of the historian of philosophy” (I, pp. 65–70). “To go back to the sources” is the first duty, which he indeed fulfilled by quoting extensively from the works of the philosophers (and not only the great ones), in some cases providing veritable anthologies of passages in support of his account. However, it is to be noted that his attention to the sources does not go beyond the printed works: concluding a note at the end of the very lengthy discussion of the Middle Ages, which is included in the second edition of the *Histoire comparée*, Degérando states that he has been able to consult a considerable part of the manuscripts of the medieval philosophers which are preserved in the *Bibliothèque Royale* (nowadays *Bibliothèque Nationale*), but he has found nothing interesting in them, and he is doubtful about the fact that future scholars will find them fruitful (*Hist. comp.*², I/4, p. 612)).

The task of tracing the sources, which is that of all historians, comes with other tasks which are specific to the historian of philosophy (here Degérando refers in a note to the recent *Methodenstreit*, on which see *Models*, III, p. 845). It is “certainly necessary that he has developed some personal opinions, previously defined and meditated on his own, which allow him to grasp the connections between objects; but he needs even more to avoid judging the doctrines by referring to the ideas of his century, his nation, his School, [or] his own personal ideas; he must beware of all general prejudices (in favour of both the ancients and the moderns), an excessive

inclination either to admiration or to censure, and the need always to explain what is often inexplicable [...]; he has to avoid ambiguities, arbitrary hypotheses, and rash inductions” (I, pp. 67–68). This is all in order to gain an “intelligence of doctrines”; as for the method of presenting history, it must meet four requirements: “clarity, which makes every object easily comprehensible; analogy, which favours juxtapositions; connecting circumstances, which discloses the relationship between effects and causes; and finally, fidelity, not only meant as a literal accuracy but as a far more difficult fidelity which sheds light on the *true spirit of a doctrine*, making us perceive how its author elaborated it and showing us the chief ideas, the relation of subordination between parts, the starting point, the purpose, and the connection linking all things” (I, pp. 68–69 [italics in the text], where a reference is made to Fülleborn). In conclusion, Degérando creates an ideal portrait of the historian of philosophy, even though there certainly exists – yesterday no less than today – an almost inevitable gap between intentions and actual historiographical practice, which is not always equal to such elevated aims.

We have already pointed out how much space is devoted to the sources in the *Histoire comparée*. Analogous attention is paid to critical literature, and indeed the work reveals Degérando’s up-to-date knowledge of the, mainly German, historiography of philosophy, quoting writers like J. Thomasius, Buddeus, Brucker, Scheffer, Meiners, Hissmann, Eberhard, Adam Smith, Garve, Tennemann, Dugald Stewart... At times he takes care to provide further bibliographical information: for Hume’s “idealistic” outcomes, for example, he refers the reader to the observations made by Sulzer, Stäudlin, and Jacobi (I, p. 466 [482]); as for the Scottish school, he declares that he has also taken information from his Geneva friend Pierre Prévost, who translated both Adam Smith and then Dugald Stewart and was himself the author of a work on the influence of “signs” on the formation of ideas (I, p. 376 [392]).

But the writers who recur most frequently are Tiedemann, Buhle, and Fülleborn. Sometimes – as in the case of Campanella – they appear clearly opposed to Condillac’s historiographical theories, which Degérando shows he is fully aware of and which he criticises without hesitation. But his interest in German works, even at the expense of the ‘great master’ of sensualism and the *Idéologie*, does not exclude recourse to the French tradition, as in the observations concerning Fontenelle and Thomas described above (whose title in the margin is: “Materials for the History of the Human Mind”) and above all in the second part, where he makes use of information and frameworks taken from the *histoire de l’esprit humain*: an eloquent example here is the lengthy survey of the opinions of the different peoples regarding natural phenomena (see above, p. 303). An additional ‘French’ feature of the *Histoire comparée* is its lively, flowing style, which is generally *agréable*. Despite frequent repetitions in the second part (where Degérando seems to seriously adopt the maxim *repetita iuvant*, thus misusing the art of *variatio* and stringing his schematic surveys together), the text offers considerable clarity, both from the point of view of the narrative and the critical ability, in such a way that there is not room for any grey areas: these qualities, inherited from the *siècle des lumières*, were to favour the circulation of the work – and the ideas contained in it – during the course of the nineteenth century.

4.1.5 Degérando's historiographical work, which resulted from the meeting of two different philosophical and national traditions, was appreciated in France for its critical importance, because "it had successfully confuted scepticism, rationalism, the mistakes made by all the sects, and above all the system elaborated by Kant, which combines the obscurity and the disadvantages of all the other systems" (MU, XII, p. 1246; on the fortune of the *Histoire comparée* in Great Britain, see above, pp. 563 and 578). In Germany, the publication of the *Histoire comparée* was welcomed as an event which deserved "national gratitude" because for the first time (except Villers) a French scholar "had done justice to the genius and merits of the Germans in the field of philosophy" and had shown he possessed great familiarity with German historiography, "which is superior to that of all the other nations put together". Particular emphasis is laid on Degérando's intention to put himself forward as a mediator (*Vermittler*) between the "French party" and the "German party", identifying the systematic analysis of knowledge as "a point of encounter between Kantian critical philosophy and empiricism", which is "something certainly new for most French empiricists" (GGA, 1804, pp. 1305–1308; this review has been attributed to Friedrich Bouterwek: cf. ALE, 1804, IV, p. 139).

The 'Avertissement' added by the "booksellerpublisher" to the second edition (1822) states that the *Histoire comparée* was received quite favourably, and it quickly sold out. During the second decade of the nineteenth century, the lack of this work was particularly felt in the French Universities, because it could have provided "the numerous students of the philosophical faculties [...] with a reasoned comparison between the different philosophical doctrines". Furthermore: "Reading the curricula of the courses inaugurated a few years ago at the Faculty of Letters in the Paris Academy, we notice that the professors generally base their teaching precisely on the idea underlying the work written by Monsieur Degérando" (*Hist. comp.*², I/1 pp. I–III; in a note added to the 'Introduction', Degérando himself had pointed out the teaching value of his work, expressing the desire that it might become for students "a sort of methodical and reasoned library of the writers who, over the centuries and in the various nations, have enlightened both the principles and the history of this fundamental science": I/1, p. xxxi).

The observations added by the publisher, which appear to hint at the attempt (made by Laromiguière, Royer-Collard, and above all Cousin) to overcome the opposition between empiricism and rationalism, might seem to be written out of self-interest. In fact, they had already been anticipated by the authoritative judgement of Tennemann, who, in the preface to his translation of the *Histoire comparée*, had maintained Degérando's superiority, "both as a thinker and as a historian", with respect to the other French author of a general history of philosophy, namely Deslandes. Tennemann appreciated not only Degérando's lively style and his "often appropriate comparisons and descriptions", but also the fact that he possesses "certain qualities which are not always present in his compatriots and which can be attributed to his deep study of the German language". Besides direct recourse to the sources, as far as possible, Degérando had the "most felicitous idea" of arranging "all the different philosophical systems according to a predominant perspective",

thus putting forward “the solution to the great problems of the human intellect” (*Vergleichende Geschichte der Systeme der Philosophie*, ‘Vorrede’, p. ix). Even greater terms of praise were used by Dugald Stewart, who mentioned the “rare union of knowledge, generosity of sentiments, and philosophical profundity” present in Degérando’s work, and was pleased to notice “a surprising and complete analogy” with his own positions (*Philosophical Essays*, Edinburgh, 1810, 3rd Essay, p. 14).

Back in France the judgements expressed by Destutt de Tracy and Bonald, then Cousin are of interest because of their different philosophical and ideological roots. In his *Logic*, in reply to a long note on him in the third tome of Degérando’s *Histoire comparée*, Tracy defines the work as “extremely admirable and useful”, but reproaches it for “confusing erudition with profundity” and for being too compliant with the prejudices of the Germans against the French. For example, when confronted with Kantian’s accusation that the French neglected Kant’s thought out of light-mindedness, indifference, or conceit, Degérando promptly attacked his own country, ascribing this negligence to the negative effects of the Revolution, “owing to which philosophy in France has been discredited and is no longer taught in our schools”. Tracy fervently reacts reminding the former *idéologue* (who had in the past “successfully defeated several rivals, many of whom were praiseworthy, had been rewarded by the *Institut national*, becoming one of its members”) that we cannot “ignore that many Frenchmen successfully cultivate every part of sound philosophy [i.e. the *Idéologie*]” and that, according to the new educational regulations of the IV year, this philosophy [named *analyse des idées*] has been included in the institutions providing higher knowledge and in public teaching; indeed, “should we really call what was taught under this name in our old colleges philosophy?”, that is to say traditional logic and metaphysics. As for Kant’s theories, most French scholars reject them because they “rest on a very imperfect notion of our intellectual faculties; and we do not wish to concern ourselves with something we consider to be founded on a false basis” (Destutt de Tracy, *Éléments d’idéologie*, III, pp. 279–289). What for Tennemann and the German reviewers was a merit of Degérando (his attention to the German world) thus becomes in Tracy’s eyes a demerit on a philosophical as well as patriotic level; yet we should admit that Tracy’s criticisms reveal a certain partiality, since in the pages under accusation Degérando puts forward many other quite reasonable reasons, to justify the limited interest in Kant shown by the French. The root of this disagreement is their difference in attitude towards Condillac’s philosophy, so much so that in these very pages Tracy explicitly manifests his disapproval of the negative judgement expressed by Degérando on the *Traité des systèmes*, which, for Tracy, represents the “best work” written by Condillac, who he celebrates as the “founder of the science of the human intelligence (ideology)” (p. 72; cf. *Hist. comp.*¹, II, pp. 172–175).

Bonald (who, as we have seen, makes extensive use of the *Histoire comparée*, although he does not share at all of its theoretical orientation) stresses the qualities of this work – impartiality, clarity, stylistic elegance, completeness – which make it the best work available in France. All these qualities, however, do not affect the fideistic scepticism adopted by Bonald, for whom the *Histoire comparée* “is

fundamentally nothing but another *history of the variations* shown by philosophical schools, which results in an absolute discouragement, an insuperable aversion to all philosophical research, and in the proven impossibility of raising any edifice in the future, or rather, of attempting to base any construction on this ‘inconsistent ground’, to use Bossuet’s fitting expression”. Hence, observes Bonald with an incisive pun, when our impartial author becomes the promoter of a *philosophie de l’expérience* as the “last anchor” human thought can turn to, then “I dare recall him and all sensible minds to the *experience of philosophy*”, that is to say, to recognising the irreconcilable variety of philosophical doctrines (*Oeuvres complètes de M. de Bonald*, II, 1, cols 3 and 30–31, italics in the text).

Particularly noteworthy is the judgement expressed by Cousin, not only because Cousin played a major role in nineteenth-century historiography of philosophy, but also because of the helpful (and self-serving) ‘historicization’ to which he subjected the *Histoire comparée*, playing on the fact that he was referring above all to the second edition of this work. Indeed, he observes that the first edition was published when the prevailing doctrine was still Condillac’s “exclusive doctrine”, which he compares to a “Procrustean bed, on which dogmatism, dominant at the time, laid the noblest productions of the human mind, making them shorter or longer, proscribing or praising them at will”. The *Histoire comparée* distinguished itself at the time for its novelty, for the “vastness of the research conducted in it and the moderation of the judgements expressed in it”, but it could certainly not remain “alien removed from the age in which it appeared”. Hence the advisability of a second edition augmented and revised, which also made it possible to devote more space to those writers who had been unjustly neglected, such as Plato, the Neoplatonists, the Fathers, and the Scholastics. But the new edition was still based on the same approach as the first one, with all its inadequacies: the division between the narrative and the criticism and above all the fact that the treatment is centred on the problem of gnoseology, which was deeply felt at the beginning of the nineteenth century and was therefore unduly extended to all historical periods and thinkers, creating a unilateral and unnatural historical reconstruction, rather than an “in-depth comprehension of the past”. Here we again find the fundamental defect in Condillac’s philosophy, “which, with respect to theory, mutilated the human mind in order to explain it more easily, and, with respect to history, mutilated the systems in order to justify them”. Fortunately – Cousin concludes with evident satisfaction – after 1804 “a freer philosophy started to emancipate history [...]. After every faculty of the human soul had been returned to it, [philosophy] became or will become able to establish a relationship and to be in sympathy with all the developments of the human soul over the centuries, with all situations experienced by humanity, and with all the movements of history” (V. Cousin, *Fragmens philosophiques* (Paris, 1826), pp. 52–61; the review of the *Hist. comp.*² had previously appeared in JS, July 1825, pp. 434–439).

Cousin does not mention the profession of eclecticism Degérando had already explicitly formulated in the first edition, nor the fact that his scheme of the ‘four systems’ was evidently taken from Degérando. Hence we have the cliché of Degérando as a dull and hardly fervent follower of Condillac who was later became converted to Cousin’s eclecticism, which resulted in the *Histoire comparée* being

‘withdrawn from the market’ and deprived of its specific features, even though it was used as a practical store of information and historiographical frameworks. Indications of the success enjoyed by the *Histoire comparée*, however, can be seen throughout Europe, from England (where the first edition had been promptly reviewed and the second edition was judged positively by Lewes)²³ to Italy,²⁴ and even to Russia, where it was used by the archimandrite Gavriil for his *Istorija filosofii* (Kazan’, 1837–1839) (see *Storia delle storie generali della filosofia*, 4/II, ed. by G. Piaia and G. Santinello (Rome and Padua, 2004), pp. 506–516).

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the importance of Degérando as a historian of philosophy was emphasised in particular by Marin Ferraz, who even compared him to Hegel because of his attempt to create a higher synthesis between materialism and idealism, even though he reproached him – as Cousin had done before – for seeing “the pivot of every system” as the question of the origin of ideas, while this problem had only been of fundamental importance for the philosophers of the eighteenth century. Reversing opinion current at the time whereby Degérando was merely an “uncertain supporter of Condillac, who one day, under the influence of Victor Cousin, became an eclectic”, Ferraz rightly sees the author of the *Histoire comparée* as the predecessor of Cousin himself, both with reference to the scheme of classification of systems and the idea of reconciling all “exclusive” systems and reaching an “ever-lasting philosophy that always feeds on the remains of transitory systems” (Ferraz, pp. 171 and 177–179). But judgements like this were not enough to save the *Histoire comparée* from undeserved neglect, also favoured by the fact that – as one biographer pointed out – its author originated from a century, the eighteenth, “whose spirit we tend to condemn today, whose efforts we fail to treat with respect, and whose hopes we despise” (F.-A. Mignet, *Éloges historiques*, Paris, 1864, p. 45). Indeed, some of the fundamental ideas of the *Histoire comparée*, appropriated by Cousin’s eclecticism, were spread to such an extent that the connection with he who had first elaborated them was lost. This was cleverly observed by Picavet towards the end of the nineteenth century: “Degérando is scarcely read, especially in the first edition of his *Histoire comparée*, so that it would be easy to find in his work a good number of ideas which were considered to be original when they appeared in the works of his successors”, from Ravaisson to Boutroux, Brochard, Victor Egger, and Dubois-Reymond (Picavet, p. 515; but see also p. 514, footnote, where Degérando’s application of the criterion of classification is judged to be rather less schematic and simplistic than Cousin’s).

²³ G.H. Lewes, *A Biographical History of Philosophy* (London-New York, without date of publication [sed 1891; 1 ed.: London, 1845–1846], p. xiv: “This work enjoys considerable reputation, and deserves it. Clear, discriminating, and well written”.

²⁴ It is significant, for example, that in the lowest part of the title page of Giovanni Campiglio’s *Storia dei progressi delle scienze filosofiche* (Milan, G. Chiusi, 1842) we find a passage from Degérando: “Why ever does not anyone think about extracting from the huge depository of the thoughts elaborated during so many centuries the correct ideas and the useful truths that are confusedly gathered there and use them to form a picture showing that the valuable minds of all times agree more than it is believed?”.

In the twentieth century, the most penetrating judgement on the *Histoire comparée* was expressed by Martial Gueroult. While praising Degérando for being “the first of the historians of philosophy to deserve this name in France”, he pointed out the internal contradiction that undermines the theoretical bases of the *Histoire comparée* and makes it basically a failure: the intention to found the historiography of philosophy on experience, that is to say, on those original and unyielding “facts” we call doctrines, is endangered by recourse to “general types”, while the original experience of historical information is subjected to a “project of reconciliation” aiming at harmonising the various systems, thus eliminating all specific originality. Hence, “the mistake of the metaphysics of the history of philosophy, which consisted in believing that it was possible to reconstruct the whole of history with reference to only one original philosophy, is replaced by the opposite mistake, which envisages that it is possible to build an original philosophy by juxtaposing fragments of past philosophies, as if the fact of ruminating (*ressasser*) on historical realities might constitute as such a historical reality, a reality, that is, worthy of being placed side by side with the other realities on the magnificent paths of history” (Gueroult, pp. 711 and 735).

In Degérando this contradiction is related to his gnoseological positions and to the ensuing attempt to shift the empirical-classificatory method adopted in natural history onto a historiographical plane, although the final aim is to reach a further unifying synthesis. In truth, this is the fundamental weakness of all historiographical eclecticism which aims at overcoming the *contemplation/comprehension* of the specificity and differences characterising the individual philosophical doctrines in order to reach a *construction/explanation* of a history of philosophy and, at the same time, a new philosophy. These attempts were inevitably destined to fail on a theoretical level, as we will see later with Cousin’s eclecticism, but they greatly fostered interest in the history of philosophy, which was therefore able to occupy a strategic position in the French cultural scene during the first half of the nineteenth century. And – let us repeat it – we must recognise that it is above all Degérando, and not Cousin, who has the merit of this historiographical *essor* in the homeland of Descartes, Malebranche, and Condillac.

4.1.6 On Degérando’s life, works, and thought: DBF, XV, cols 1191–1199; DPh, I, p. 688; EPhU, III/1, pp. 1708–1709; *Lettres de Mme de Gérando suivies de fragments d’un journal écrit par elle de 1800 à 1804* (Paris, 1880); V. Cousin, *Discours au nom de la section de Philosophie de l’Académie de sciences morales et politiques aux funérailles de Degérando* (Paris, 1842); Damiron, p. 8 (Degérando is included in the “eclectic school” understood in a broad sense); J.-B. Bayle-Mouillard, *Éloge de J.-M. De Gérando* (Paris, 1846); O. Morel, *Essai sur la vie et les travaux de Marie-Joseph Degérando* (Paris, 1846); Picavet, pp. 505–518; H. Tronchon, *La fortune intellectuelle de Herder en France. La préparation* (Paris, 1920; repr. Geneva, 1971), pp. 377–394; Baldensperger, *Le mouvement des idées dans l’émigration française*, Vol. II, pp. 268–271; W. Köster, *Joseph Marie Degérando als Philosoph* (Paderborn, 1933), in particular pp. 52–61 (concerning the *Hist. comp.*) and 62–76 (on the interpretation of Kant); G. Berlia, *Gérando. Sa*

vie, son oeuvre (Paris, 1942); Gouhier, *Les conversions de Maine de Biran*, pp. 160–167; M. David, *Dégérando et le triple problème de l'écriture du XVIII^e siècle au début du XIX^e siècle*, RPhFE, CXLIV (1954), pp. 401–411; H.B. Acton, ‘La philosophie du langage sous la Révolution française’, *Archives de philosophie*, XXIV (1961), pp. 426–449; Moravia², pp. 223–238 and *passim*; Moravia³, pp. 417–456; A. Chervel, ‘Le débat sur l'arbitraire du signe au XIX^e siècle’, *Romantisme. Revue du XIX^e siècle*, XXV–XXVI (1979), pp. 3–33; J.-F. Braunstein, ‘De Gérando, le social et la fin de l'idéologie’, *Corpus*, nos 14–15 (1990), pp. 197–215; P. Saint Germain, ‘Dégérando. Philosophie et Philanthropie’, *ibid.*, pp. 217–228; M. Sanlorenzo, ‘Dégérando: i segni e l'arte di pensare. Saggio introduttivo’, in J.-M. Degérando, *I segni e l'arte di pensare*, ed. by M. Sanlorenzo, foreword by C. Sini (Milan, 1991), pp. 11–122; R. Pellerey, *Le lingue perfette nel secolo dell'utopia*, preface by U. Eco (Rome-Bari, 1992), pp. 97–116 (on the “pasigraphy” of Joseph de Maimieux) and 208–216 (on Degérando); M.-C. Hoock-Demarle, ‘Femmes en miroir. Germaine de Staël vue par Madame de Gérando’, *Cahiers Staëliens*, XLVIII (1996–1997), pp. 14–47; G. Paoletti, ‘Una filosofia del linguaggio al tempo della Rivoluzione francese: il *Des signes* di Degérando’, *Teoria*, XIX (1999), pp. 127–145; F. Solitario, ‘Dall'antropologia culturale all'idea di “Philosophie comparée” in J.-M. Degérando’, *Storia, antropologia e scienze del linguaggio*, XVIII (2001), 1, pp. 9–59; L. Hennequin-Lecomte, ‘Mme de Staël et Joseph de Gérando de 1800 à 1811, entre “Scythie” et “fonctions publiques”’, *Cahiers staëliens*, LXII (2012), pp. 117–134; *Joseph-Marie de Gérando (1772–1842). Connaître et réformer la société*, ed. by J.-L. Chappey, C. Christen, and I. Moullier Carole (Rennes, 2014); A. Bocquet, *Portrait d'un spiritualiste en penseur social. Joseph-Marie de Gérando (1772–1842)* (Besançon, 2016).

On his historico-philosophical perspective: Bréhier, pp. 21–22 and 27; J. Lagneau, *Célèbres leçons et fragments*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1964), p. 56 (on the interpretation of Spinoza); P. Vernière, *Spinoza et la pensée française avant la Révolution* (Paris, 1954; repr. Geneva, 1979), pp. 695–702; Geldsetzer, pp. 55, 65, 100, and 140; Braun, p. 233; Gueroult, pp. 709–711; M. Le Doeuff, ‘J.-M. Degérando lecteur de Spinoza’, in *Spinoza entre Lumières et Romantisme*, ed. by J. Bonnamour and P. Vernière, *Les cahiers de Fontenay*, nos 36–38 (1985), pp. 199–205; B. Rupp-Eisenreich, ‘Christoph Meiners et Joseph-Marie Degérando: un chapitre du comparatisme anthropologique’, in *L'homme des Lumières et la découverte de l'autre*, ed. by D. Droixhe and P.P. Gossiaux (Bruxelles, 1985), pp. 21–47; G. Hassler, ‘La philosophie allemande dans l'oeuvre de Joseph-Marie Degérando’, in *La réception de la philosophie allemande en France aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles*, ed. by J. Quillien (Lille, 1994), pp. 73–84; Ragghianti, pp. 20–22, 25–27, and 44–46; Schneider, pp. 189 and 353; Daled, *Le matérialisme occulté et la genèse du «sensualisme»* (see in particular chapters 2 and 5); P.K.J. Park, *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780–1830* (Albany, NY, 2013), pp. 31–67; *Models*, III, *passim*; A. Yuva, ‘L'utilité indirecte de la philosophie et de son histoire chez Gérando’, in *Joseph-Marie de Gérando (1772–1842). Connaître et reformer la société*, pp. 63–77; C. König-Pralong, *La*

colonie philosophique. Écrire l'histoire de la philosophie aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles (Paris, 2019), pp. 72–73, 88–89, 96–97, 101–109, and 129–133; S. Lézé, ‘Contrôler le territoire philosophique à coups de canon. L’éclipse de “l’histoire comparée” de J.-M. Degérando (1772–1842) à l’orée d’une juridiction de l’incomparable,’ in *The Territories of Philosophy in Modern Historiography*, ed. by C. König-Pralong, M. Meliador, and Z. Radeva (Turnhout and Bari, 2019), pp. 223–244; S. Manzo, ‘Historiographical Approaches on Experience and Empiricism in the Early Nineteenth-Century: Degérando and Tennemann’, *Perspectives on Science*, XXVII (2019), 5, pp. 643–654; D. Antoine-Mahut, ‘Philosophizing with a historiographical figure: Descartes in Degérando’s “Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie” (1804 and 1847)’, *BJHPh*, XXVIII (2020), 3, pp. 533–552.

On his fortune: ALE, (1804), IV, pp. 139–146; DPhLP, an XII [1804], III, pp. 321–327; GGA, (1804), pp. 1305–1318 and 1345–1397; JALZ, nos 5–7 (1808), cols 33–54; JS, July 1825, pp. 434 ff.; ME, (1805), III, p. 404; MU, an XII [1804], “3 Messidor”, pp. 1245–1246; an XIII [1805], “30 Frimaire”, p. 326; NTA, (1806), pp. 307–310; (1808), pp. 158–159; *The Critical Review*, August 1804, pp. 559–571; *The Monthly Review*, XLIV (1804), pp. 520–525; *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, XIX (1804), pp. 453–457; J.H.M. Ernesti, *Enzyklopädisches Handbuch einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Philosophie und ihrer Litteratur [...]* (Lemgo, 1807; repr. Düsseldorf, 1972), pp. 94–101; G.T. Novello, *Sui principii e progressi della storia naturale considerata in tutte le sue diramazioni [...] e con un generale quadro comparativo dell’antica colla moderna filosofia* (Venice, 1809–1811), Vol. IV/2, pp. 464–566 (on which see *Models*, III, p. 255); V. Cousin, *Fragmens philosophiques* (Paris, 1826), pp. 52–61; Ferraz, pp. 167–180.

Chapter 5

Historicism and Eclecticism: The Age of Victor Cousin



Gregorio Piaia

Introduction

(a) *From the Bourbons to Louis-Philippe: The victory of the alliance between history, philosophy, and politics*

“We have never done what we thought of doing long ago at Sens, when you wished to write a critical history of Philosophy and I a great mediaeval romance [...]” (G. Flaubert, *Sentimental Education*, in *The Complete Works* (New York and London, 1904), 6/II, p. 326). With these words in the final pages of *L'éducation sentimentale*, the protagonist reminds his fellow student of the youthful plans they had made while still at college in the late 1830s. It may be surprising for us, accustomed as we are to postmodernism and therefore not much inclined to ‘vast narrations’, that a young man with promise should set himself the aim of writing a *histoire critique de la philosophie*, and so much the more because Flaubert had previously explained, at the beginning of the second chapter, that the same young man, who had been converted to the study of philosophy after opening a translation of Plato at random (quite probably the translation edited by Cousin), “dreamed of formulating a vast *system of philosophy*, which might have the most far-reaching applications”. But in reality there was no divergence between the two projects because in the intellectual climate of the 1830s and 1840s the fact of ‘practising the history of philosophy’ was an essential and constitutive moment in ‘practising philosophy’, and it has been rightly observed that the production of general histories of philosophy in France culminated – in terms of quantity – precisely in the 1830s (Schneider, pp. 346–348).

This was the period in which Victor Cousin’s eclecticism exerted an undisputed hegemony, elevated to the function of official philosophy of the Orleanist regime, which – in addition to psychology – was centred on a the study of the history of

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philosophy. This political and cultural hegemony was to be strongly criticised, but was perfectly suited to the romantic and idealistic context of those years, which was imbued with an intense historical sensitivity and a real faith in humanity, diversely modulated in the name of the secularization of the religious perspective (from the realization and accomplishment of the traditional Christian faith to a more or less radical alternative to it).

Around half a century later, Marin Ferraz seemed particularly aware of this 'historicist' climate and, referring to Victor Cousin's preeminent interest in the history of philosophy, observed that "indeed, he lived in an epoch which, after the theories treasured during the eighteenth century had proved incapable of giving all that was expected of them, had given way to history. Instead of re-writing Rousseau's *Contrat social*, Guizot produced his *Histoire de la civilisation*; instead of creating an equivalent to abbé Batteux's treatise on *Les beaux arts et les belles lettres*, Villemain wrote his *Tableau de la littérature française au XVIII^e siècle*. It seemed obvious therefore that, instead of writing *Méditations* like Descartes or a *Traité des sensations* like Condillac, Cousin should write a *Histoire de la philosophie au XVIII^e siècle* and a *Histoire générale de la philosophie*" (Ferraz, pp. 261–262): precisely the dream cherished by the young student in Sens.

But towards the middle of the century, Ernest Renan in the 'Preface' to his *thèse* on Averroes and Averroism (1852) – which marked a turning point in the study of the history of philosophy in France – had already clearly expressed the significance of the cultural transformation which had taken place in the period of the Restoration and the monarchy of Louis-Philippe: "The characteristic feature of the nineteenth century is that it has replaced the dogmatic method with the historical method in all studies concerning the human mind. Literary criticism is by now nothing other than an account, of the different forms of beauty, that is to say, of the ways in which the different families and different epochs of humanity have solved the aesthetic problem. Philosophy is nothing other than the scheme of the solutions proposed in resolve the philosophical problem. Theology must become nothing other than the history of the spontaneous efforts made in order to solve the divine problem. Indeed, history is the necessary form of the science of all that which is submitted to the laws of life which changes and proceeds. The science of languages is the history of languages; the science of literatures and philosophies is the history of literatures and philosophies; similarly, the science of the human mind is not only the analysis of the mechanisms of the individual soul but it is the history of the human mind": E. Renan, *Averroès et l'averroïsme. Essai historique*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1861), p. vi. This theoretical and methodological awareness, which was particularly refined in the 30-year-old Renan ("from the past we should expect nothing but the past itself": p. v), was certainly partly the result of his vast philological and comparative education; but it was also the most mature product of a strong, generalised inclination toward the philosophy of history, which was the inspiring nucleus of the atmosphere we have generically defined as romantic and idealistic, which therefore constituted the *humus* on which such a widespread interest in the "general" history of philosophy could grow.

Besides the philosopher Cousin, it was above all the historian François Guizot, in the crowded lectures he held at the Sorbonne, who vigorously proclaimed the idea of an “inevitable alliance between philosophy and history”. This union, observed Guizot with the fervour of he who has a mission to fulfil, is imposed by the “present state of the world” and “constitutes precisely one of the features, perhaps even the essential feature, of our epoch. We are called on to take into consideration science and reality, theory and practice, rights and facts, and make them advance together. Up until now, these two powers existed separately”. Further on, he insists: “I will therefore obey the natural tendency, the advantage, the need of our time, constantly passing from examining circumstances to examining ideas, from an expression of facts to a question of doctrines”; and so much the more because the inclination to prefer facts against the “despotism of general ideas”, which is establishing itself in France in recent times and which represents “new progress”, should not, however, make us forget that “facts are only valuable in so far as they express truth and tend to become increasingly assimilated to it” (F. Guizot, *Cours d'histoire moderne*. [I:] *Histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe depuis la chute de l'Empire romain jusqu'à la Révolution française* (Paris, 1828), IV^e leçon, pp. 3 and 5–6). In practice, Guizot's perspective was indebted, more than he cared to admit, to the eighteenth-century *histoire de l'esprit humain* and in particular to Condorcet's *Esquisse*; but what was new – or was perceived as new – was the romantic and religious inspiration which imbued his text. Guizot's historical reconstruction does not lack elements however which can be traced back to the *histoire de l'esprit humain*, such as the emphasis placed on the establishment of the human mind – with its universal demand for free thought – as the “only and chief moving force” acting in the eighteenth century (XIV^e leçon, pp. 34–38; but see also, in vol. II of the *Cours d'histoire moderne*, pp. 192–193, the “prodigious novelty of the Christian religion” as an “essentially practical revolution” aiming at changing the whole human society, whereas “Greek philosophy had been essentially scientific and applied itself more to seeking truth rather than to reforming and governing morals”).

Guizot's fervent enunciations – but also, as we will see, the equally passionate statements made by Cousin – reveal an epochal turning point in France together with a crisis in the legitimist monarchy and the advent, after the July revolution, of the new monarchy established by Louis-Philippe of Orleans, king of the French, an event which restored liberal France as the guide of European nations and took on not only political but also ideal values, launched in a philosophical perspective to embrace the whole historical span of humanity. This synthesis between a universal outlook, pivoting around the concept of the “path of humanity”, and national pride (based on the superiority of the “French genius” and therefore on France's mission to civilize)¹ was the idea that inspired the inaugural lecture of the course in modern philosophy (13th December, 1830) that Théodore Jouffroy had inherited from

¹ Guizot, *Cours d'histoire moderne. Histoire générale de la civilisation européenne*, I^{er} leçon, p. 5: “[...] en un mot, la clarté, la sociabilité, la sympathie sont le caractère particulier de la France, de sa civilisation, et ces qualités la rendaient éminemment propre à marcher à la tête de la civilisation européenne”.

Cousin,² and it found its crier in another great historian advocating liberal ideas, Jules Michelet. In the preface to his *Introduction à l'histoire universelle* (1831), Michelet did not hesitate to affirm that the “glorious fatherland has now become the pilot of the vessel of humanity”, although he emphatically observed that “this vessel now is flying into a hurricane; it is advancing so quickly that even those most stable are seized by vertigo, and every chest is oppressed by it. What can I do in the midst of this nice and terrible movement? Only one thing: understand it” (J. Michelet, *Introduction à l'histoire universelle, suivie du Discours d'ouverture prononcé en 1834 à la Faculté des Lettres, et d'un Fragment sur l'éducation des femmes au moyen âge*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1843), p. v).

In short, this is the philosophy of history which underlies this perspective and allows us to “understand” the course of events: “The beginning of the world meant the beginning of a war which must end with the world, and not before: the war of man against nature, the spirit against matter, freedom against fatality. History is nothing but an account of this everlasting struggle. During recent years [he refers here to the period in which the international order imposed by the Holy Alliance was dominant] fatality appeared to appropriate both science and the world. It quietly established itself in philosophy and in history. Freedom asserted itself in society; the time has come for it to assert itself in science as well. Should this *Introduction* fulfil its purpose, then history will appear as the eternal protest, as the progressive triumph of freedom” (pp. 9–10). From here he briefly goes over the long path followed by man towards the “progressive emancipation” which had started in India and the Near East and then, through Greece and Rome, had developed thanks to the contribution of the four great European nations (France, Italy, England, Germany), until it reached its fulfilment in contemporary France.³

(b) *A respectable attardé: P.-C.-F. Daunou and the “experimental” history of philosophical systems*

With differences in inspiration and stress, this overall climate permeated almost all the general histories of philosophy between the 1820s and the revolution of

² Sainte-Beuve, p. 179: “Aujourd’hui les destinées de l’homme et de l’humanité s’agitent; elles sont représentées par le pays qui a toujours marché à la tête de la civilisation moderne, en sorte que, si ces destinées peuvent être trouvées par la France, elles le seront pour l’Europe et pour le monde entier”.

³ Michelet, *Introduction à l'histoire universelle*, p. v: “Ce livre pourrait aussi bien être intitulé *Introduction à l'Histoire de France*; c’est à la France qu’il aboutit”. It is to be observed that other similar themes had already been expressed – although with a different political leaning – by the Catholic and legitimist thinker Pierre-Simon Ballanche in his *Essai sur les institutions sociales dans leur rapport avec les idées nouvelles* (1818): “L’esprit humain marche dans une route obscure et mystérieuse où il ne lui est jamais permis de rétrograder; il ne lui est pas même permis d’être stationnaire. Les nations dégénèrent; l’esprit humain marche toujours. [...] M. Ancillon a remarqué fort bien que l’histoire est le tableau de la lutte perpétuelle qu’existe entre la nécessité et la liberté. [...] la France est encore à la tête de la civilisation actuelle. La légitimité française vient de sauver l’Europe de l’anarchie dont elle était menacée [...]. Louis XVIII, en fondant la monarchie constitutionnelle, a ressaisi pour la France la direction des destinées de l’Europe” (*Oeuvres complètes* (Paris, 1833 [repr. Geneva, 1967]), I, pp. 43, 157, and 159).

February 1848, which marked the end of the political and cultural hegemony of Cousin's eclecticism. There were exceptions, however, personified by a figure who, thanks to his venerable old age and his philosophical position, was far removed from any enthusiastic zeal for the philosophy of history. We refer to Pierre-Claude-François Daunou (1761–1840), an eminent intellectual and politician, former Oratorian, and member of the Convention and later on – during the Directorate – of the Council of 500; he was the chief author of the law on public education (1793) and the Constitution of year III (in which he managed to insert the setting up of an *Institut national des Sciences et des Arts*) and was finally appointed archivist of the Empire (1804), a post he had to leave after Waterloo and to which he was reappointed under the Orleanist monarchy when he was elected member of parliament and eventually peer of France. Formerly a professor of philosophy and theology in the schools of the Oratory, he conceived of the *Institut national* in opposition to traditional academies and, following the positions of the *Idéologues*, he defined the branch devoted to philosophical research as “Analyse des sensations et des idées”. He was considered to be the author of the anonymous ‘Avertissement’ which was appended to the first edition of Condorcet’s *Esquisse* (cf. *Models*, III, p. 170). In 1819 he was appointed professor of history at the *Collège de France*, where he taught for 11 years, giving two lectures per week. These lectures were later published: some of them (*Cours d’histoire*) appeared in Paris in 1821–1822; the complete series, comprising the lectures given from 1819 to 1830, appeared posthumously: *Cours d’études historiques* (Paris, F. Didot Frères, 1842–1849), 20 vols. The last volume bears the title *Recherches sur les systèmes philosophiques applicables à l’histoire* (419 pages, followed by a ‘Table analytique’ [pp. 421–432], an ‘Avertissement’ written by the editor Alphonse-Honoré Taillandier, dated 15th July, 1848 [pp. 433–436], and the ‘Tables des matières’ of the entire *Cours* [pp. 439–662]). It includes the lectures delivered from December 1829 to January 1830, almost 2 years after the beginning of the courses held by Guizot and Cousin at the Sorbonne. Daunou, already in his old age, presented to his audience at the *Collège de France* a position which in some way counterbalanced the new philosophical and historical word, adhering with fidelity to the principles of the *Idéologie*.

The editor seems fully aware of this cultural gap and recalls those remote years with the following words: “New ideas saw the light in literature, history, and philosophy. Messieurs Guizot and Cousin, from their chairs at the Faculty of Letters, expressed opinions which undermined those doctrines whose victory seemed assured by the consecutive efforts made during the two previous centuries. Monsieur Daunou, strongly attached to these doctrines, fought the new teachings with the arms of reason and experience. Eclecticism and Romanticism found a vigorous adversary in him. At that time, these literary struggles represented the chief concerns of public opinion” (*Recherches*, p. 435). Indeed, the combative teacher of the *Collège de France* was certainly not a figure of transition like Degérando, and from

the very first of the 13 *leçons*⁴ clearly manifested his attitude, by criticising Cousin's "new philosophy": "It is not easy to create a new system of philosophy: as we have seen, most of those who have tried, have fallen back – after some initial steps – into one of the ancient schools; alternatively, when they try to reconcile and combine different doctrines, their claimed eclecticism only leads to complicating and magnifying one of them. Almost the same happens in the strictly literary field, where the disregard of rules and models is nothing but an extremely old novelty. [...] It has often been affirmed that this need to offend and lessen the great masters of the art of writing simply indicates an inability to imitate them" (p. 20).

The root of this craving for innovations is the principle, formerly propagated by "mystical philosophy", that "enthusiasm is better than science", which implies that preeminence is given to "inner inspirations, immediate intuitions, presentiments, and emotions" rather than to observation, reflection, and analysis. But this does not apply to historians, whose action concerns "facts which must be checked and observed" and with regard to which "enthusiasm" is acceptable only as a "lively, fervent, and even passionate agreement to the truths that reason has diligently searched for and ponderingly acknowledged". Hence the appeal to offer "resistance to this system [the *Romantisme*] which is dangerous for letters and society". Just as late ancient mystical philosophy had brought about the decline of poetry and history and destroyed the remains of ancient freedom, favouring anarchy and absolute power, so "the exaltation of sentiments" and the "dominion of absolute ideas" has brought the French people in recent times to "dreadful excesses". And again: "Have we not then seen another enthusiasm establish and strengthen a military tyranny for thirteen years which was the sworn enemy of classical history, as it had been shaped by Tacitus, and at the same time an enemy of that experimental philosophy which Bacon had elevated again among our neighbours and which had increased among us?" (p. 31). Here he is obviously referring to Condillac, who was subsequently the

⁴The first lesson, 'Innovations littéraires, anciennes et nouvelles méthodes en histoire', concludes the previous treatment (vol. XIX of the *Cours d'études historiques*) concerning the historians, in particular Thucydides and Xenophon. The other 12 lessons are distributed as follows: II. 'Systèmes philosophiques appliqués à l'histoire'; III. 'Précis de l'histoire de la philosophie après Platon jusqu'à l'an 500 de l'ère vulgaire'; IV. 'Platonisme et mysticisme dans les premiers siècles de l'ère vulgaire'; V. 'Proclus; philosophie du moyen âge'; VI. 'Philosophie du moyen âge, de l'an 1000 à l'an 1300'; VII. 'Philosophie du moyen âge. An 1300 à 1600'; VIII. 'Philosophie du seizième siècle et du dix-septième jusqu'en 1650'; IX. 'Philosophie du dix-septième siècle. Campanella, Vossius, Bérigard, Descartes, Gassendi'; X. 'Philosophie du dix-septième et du dix-huitième siècle: de 1650 à 1730'; XI. 'Philosophie du dix-huitième siècle'; XII. 'Fin du précis de l'histoire de la philosophie'; XIII. 'Considérations générales sur les caractères et la classification des systèmes philosophiques, sur leurs applications aux divers genres d'études, et particulièrement à l'histoire'.

object of an authentic apology.⁵ The link between philosophy and politics therefore emerges again but is now endowed with the opposite meaning, and, similarly, the philosophical (*philosophique*) origin that the ‘theocratic’ thinkers had attributed to the French Revolution and its outcomes is now reversed: for Daunou, the Terror and the illiberal Napoleonic regime had nothing to do with the tradition of thought which ran from Bacon up to the *Idéologie*; rather, he blames the “military tyranny” created by Napoleon (whose aversion to the *Idéologues* is well-known) for referring back to “doctrines and traditions of the Middle Ages”.

The theoretical similarity between Daunou and Degérando is undisputable, even though the positions of the former are much more rigid and far from mediation. For Daunou (we are quoting the second *leçon*) “history is philosophy when it consists in a methodical series of well examined facts that are presented as experimental lessons”. Hence his interest in the “relationship between the science of facts and the different philosophical systems”, in order to identify “which, among all these systems, is more suited to the study of human annals”. This question can be answered with an “exact, precise account – which is historical in itself – of the doctrines professed by the philosophers and of the effects, either beneficial or harmful, they have engendered” (p. 35). This rigorously chronological account, which covers lessons III–XII, emphasises in particular the “fancies” (p. 387) of “Alexandrian mysticism”, the thought which Cousin himself had concentrated on with his works on Proclus and Plato, and which extends up to Kant and his critics (Jacobi, Schelling, Fichte, Ancillon). As in the case of the early Degérando, the account is followed by a “systematic classification” of the different doctrines, their division into “classes, genera, and species” according to similarities or divergences. The best division is that between “contemplative” philosophy (founded on a world of ideas serving as an archetype of the sensible world) and “experimental” philosophy.

This distinction established itself definitely only with the modern philosophers, even though some of them ended up by being included in the opposite party (as in the case of the “last semi-Platonic condition of Scottish metaphysics, which originated in Aristotle or Locke”: pp. 391–392). It is considered to be more exact than the distinction between *idealism* and *sensualism*, because the former term derives from an inappropriate extension (attributed to Mme de Staël) of the original meaning, which refers to the doctrine whereby the existence of bodies is only apparent; as for ‘sensualism’, it seems to refer properly to something related to voluptuousness and is the result of the “practice, with which the Platonists were so familiar, of responding to reasonings with accusations” (p. 394). Daunou thus defends the

⁵ *Recherches sur les systèmes philosophiques*, p. 357, where it is observed that La Harpe himself, although he is rather polemical against eighteenth-century authors (cf. *Models*, III, pp. 193–200), pays homage to Condillac’s thought, which he fully adopts and does not judge to be contrary to his Catholic faith: “En effet, Messieurs, on peut assurer qu’il n’y a pas dans les vingt-trois volumes de Condillac une seule ligne qui offense les dogmes religieux, soit naturels soit révélés. Cependant, depuis 1802 [the year in which *Le génie du Christianisme* was published] la mode s’est introduite en France, non de réfuter cette philosophie, [...] mais de la nommer sensualisme, mais de la taxer de matérialisme et peu s’en faut d’athéisme, mais enfin de la remplacer par les doctrines transcendantes ou transcendentales de l’Allemagne et de l’Écosse”.

mishandled “sensualism” (that of Aristotle, Bacon, Gassendi, Locke, and Condillac), which had been the indiscriminate target of “all sorts of anathemas and insults” and was accused not only of leading to irreligion but also of being coarse and subject to that eighteenth century “that was the golden age of mediocrity”. In conclusion, this was an authentic outburst against the criticisms levelled by romantic and idealistic culture, which had already become a commonplace and even appeared “in book advertisements and catalogues” (p. 400).

Apart from this outburst, however, the old *idéologue* aimed at the fourfold scheme to which Cousin claimed he could reduce all philosophical systems and which Daunou defines as “vague and hypothetical”. Indeed, after judging the notions of *idealism* and *sensualism* as inadequate, Daunou objects to the category of *scepticism*, because it is applied to positions that are quite different from one another: from absolute scepticism (in reality not so widespread) to the “nihilism” proper to idealism *stricto sensu* (which originated together with the Eleatic school), up to the rigorous critical methodology adopted by experimental philosophy. As regards the fourth category, *mysticism*, its application is also ambiguous. Plato’s archetypes, Descartes’ innate ideas, Malebranche’s intelligible extension, Leibniz’s preestablished harmony, and the *a priori* forms of sensibility in Kant are certainly not yet “mystical” doctrines, properly speaking, “but only one step further is enough to bring them into the wake of Plotinus, Proclus, Jamblicus, into the enchanted land of intuitions, sudden inspirations, and ecstatic visions”, which lead to “delirium, if not imposture”. It is therefore more appropriate to refer exclusively to the two major trends – contemplative philosophy and experimental philosophy – or to limit oneself to a mere “enumeration” of the systems in a chronological order. In practice “classifications must be similar to those made by naturalists, [namely] they must do nothing but resume facts. To claim that they are given and established *a priori* by the nature of things is a Platonic illusion which has introduced many prejudices and errors into the sciences” (pp. 403–405).

Although Cousin is not explicitly named here, the criticism of his apriorism becomes increasingly compelling: why should the “elements of humanity” be precisely five (industry, laws, arts, religion, and philosophy)? Could not the “arts” be included in “industry”? Where is language, which is so indispensable for laws, religion, and philosophy? And which “facts” are at the basis of the distinction between the “three elements of consciousness” (the sense of the infinite, of the finite, and of their relationship)? Why do the historian and the physicist base their assertions on documents and experiences, respectively, whereas “the facts concerning consciousness, the psychological facts, simply need to be adduced?”. Now, if these were nothing but more or less abstract words, anyone would be able to “draw from the vocabulary of metaphysics as many systems as one likes, almost in the same way as three, four, or five winning numbers come out from a lottery wheel” (p. 406).

These general considerations are rapidly applied to Kant, whose doctrine of knowledge, according to Daunou, simply “veiled under a new nomenclature”, which is obscure, the traditional distinction between ideas (or empirical intuitions), judgements, and reasonings, adding to it a “transcendental theory of methods”. With his aprioristic classifications, Kant thus “delayed the progress of science”, limiting

himself to displaying a “vain apparatus of new formulas” instead of continuing the difficult work of analysis undertaken by Descartes and then by Locke. When, for example, he makes the reproductive imagination fall within the sensible faculty, he does not analyse in depth the characteristics of attention and reflection and “does not perceive the importance of the institution of signs”. After Kant, “vague doctrines” became popular everywhere, even in France, and what prevails is the deplorable principle whereby “that which is abstract precedes, illuminates, and dominates that which is concrete” (pp. 408–409).

Coming back to the initial question (which philosophical system is the most suited to historical disciplines?), the answer appears obvious: “Only the experimental school provides historical studies with authentic methods” (“history” is here understood as a whole, as it embraces both nature and society, without distinguishing between the sciences of nature and the sciences of the mind). To experimental philosophy we owe “all the advances made by the physical and moral sciences”, because only that which is “positive and acknowledged as being real” is properly “historical” (p. 413). Daunou declares therefore that “the method of history is experimental” and that “the science of the facts of the past has nothing to do with Platonism”, which is concerned with the “general, essential, necessary things which form the invisible and inner world”. By contrast, Platonism intends to lay claim to history, with the justification that there is no true science if one limits oneself to that which is accidental and fortuitous, that is to say, to the “fact”, which presents only a reflection of truth. In order to really know a fact it is therefore necessary to rise up to its “*raison d’être*”, by virtue of which it becomes necessary; in this way we reach the “inner and rational history of humanity”, the “ideal history”, which “reveals needs instead of relating facts”. In this regard, Daunou, recalling the eighteenth-century idea of the great chain of being, admits that there is “a sensible or secret link” between the events, a “general concatenation linking all phenomena”, but definitely opposes “universal fatalism”, because “history does not guess, nor does it teach; history tells what happened” (pp. 414–416).

There are several systems of “ideal or *a priori* history” – explains Daunou to his listeners – which were elaborated in different epochs and have been taken up today: for example that of Vico, which “for a century remained buried even too rightfully in oblivion” (!). Among all these systems, he lingers over Kant’s philosophy of history, contained in *Idea for a Universal History*, to which Laurent too had referred, although from another point of view (see below, (c)). Kant’s little book brings us back in time – it had been translated into French in 1798, when the legend of “the Jacobin Kant” was still alive – and perhaps this is the reason why it is appreciated for its “ingenious observations” and its clarity – lacking instead in his metaphysical works – and is considered to be one of the best examples of a reduction of history to a system. But in the eyes of Daunou, the idea of the continual and necessary progress of society, which inspired Kant, represents a “hypothesis” not easily reconcilable with “positive history”. It is enough to consider, for example, the decline experienced by Europe from the fourth to the eleventh century, even though it is now affirmed that “the Middle Ages were in progress” and they are presented as a “necessary and useful period”. Furthermore, states Daunou with disenchantment,

“we still do not know why it was necessary for such a long series of individual misfortunes and wrongdoings to take place in order to improve our species [...]”. In any case, “we do not blame nature; but, at the same time, we do not aim to disclose the plans it keeps hidden” (pp. 417–418).

A final observation intended to better define this unusual figure of *attardé* historiographer: following a well-established tradition, in the penultimate *leçon*, Daunou presents a survey of the major modern historians of philosophy. Among the French, he mentions in laudatory terms four writers who not by chance belong to “experimental philosophy” (d’Alembert, Condillac, Condorcet, and Degérando). There are many Germans (Meiners, Tiedemann, Tennemann, Gurlitt, Fülleborn, Bardili, and Buhle), about whom he rather reductively declares that “they have diversely translated, abridged, commented on, and completed Brucker”. The latter is “still today [we are in 1830...] the most erudite and the wisest historian of philosophical doctrines and sects”, and “his work, [...] accurately written in Latin, could replace almost all the aforementioned works, because the positive things they offer are already contained in it”. Methodical, exact, impartial: “if we are looking for authentic, straightforward, and truly historical information, we find it in this author” (p. 384). The good Brucker certainly deserved this fervent praise, which shows, however, a total disregard for the developments of German-speaking historiography towards the end of the eighteenth and during the first decades of the nineteenth century.

In conclusion, Daunou’s *leçons*, a quarter of a century too late, give us the historico-philosophical precipitate of the *Idéologie* in a more general historical framework, as Condillac had previously done in the *Cours d’études* (cf. *Models*, III, pp. 61–63). This time lag, which at first glance makes Daunou seem an intellectual of the past, a sort of living fossil, is mitigated if we consider that he was tackling Cousin’s advancing eclecticism and the interest in empirical facts (as can be perceived in Guizot’s considerations quoted in the first paragraph) was at the centre of the thought of Saint-Simon and his school. In order for this link between the *Idéologie* and the emerging positivism to take place, a strong revival was needed of that philosophy of history which had found in Condorcet’s *Esquisse* its unequalled model; but the old director of the Imperial Archives – who, among other things, had contributed for several years to the monumental *Histoire littéraire de la France* with articles on medieval writers – was far from translating his puntiform view of historical “facts” into frescoes which could embracing the past, the present, and the future.

(c) *The general history of philosophy and social positivism: from Saint-Simon to Comte*

In practice, the revival of Condorcet’s historical and philosophical perspective had already taken place with a strong ideological and political connotation, thanks to Saint-Simon (1760–1825), who, between 1808 and 1811, in the middle of the Napoleonic age, had presented the anonymous plan for a new encyclopaedia which was to appear in English, German, Italian, and French and which, half a century after the great undertaking by Diderot and d’Alembert, was to take stock of the scientific achievements and present “new means to accelerate the progress of the

lights of reason”, with a view to “perfecting” the human mind (*Esquisse d'une nouvelle Encyclopédie, ou Introduction à la philosophie du Dix-neuvième siècle; ouvrage dédié aux penseurs. Premier aperçu*, (Paris, Moreau et Compagnie, [undated]), p. 4). This was not only a proposal for subscription, because in the booklet (which was only eight pages long) the publisher's notice is preceded by an ‘Épigramme de l'Auteur’, in which, very concisely and in an almost aphoristic style, Saint-Simon explains his point of view based on observation of the “successive advances of the human mind” over the course of time and entirely centred on the opposition between “vague speculations” and “positive philosophy”. Thus we see, in Antiquity, Plato and Aristotle devoting themselves to “reasonings” and “facts”, respectively; the modern age is characterised by a similar opposition between Descartes and Bacon, whereas the “third epoch” is marked by the appearance of the “spiritualist” Kant. “Who, among Kant's contemporaries”, wonders Saint-Simon, “will renew the direction given by Aristotle and Bacon?”. We see here, therefore, an anticipation of that principle of alternation between “critical” epochs and “organic” epochs which was to characterise Saint-Simon's vision of history: “Eighteenth-century philosophy has been critical and revolutionary, nineteenth-century philosophy will be inventive and organic” (pp. 3–5).

These initial ideas had a sequel: shortly after Saint-Simon's death, the lawyer Paul-Mathieu Laurent (1793–1877), who was to be elected deputy for Ardèche in the 1848 Constituent Assembly and the 1849 Legislative Assembly on the benches of the far Left, and who was to collaborate on the publication of Saint-Simon and Enfantin's works, published a pocket-size *Résumé de l'histoire de la philosophie* (Paris, Lecoq et Durey, 1826, 18°, pp. xi–474) in the ‘Collection de résumés des sciences et des arts’. In the preface, which is addressed “À Monsieur Victor Cousin” but is inspired by Condorcet, the author observes that in studying the history of philosophy he has constantly come across the “tenacious opposition of a power which, surviving all revolutions of all empires and changing only its name and form, has defamed, or even persecuted, the generous men whose intellectual works had a philanthropic tendency”,⁶ with the aim of “stopping the progress of reason and the perfecting of the human species”. This “power” is contrasted with “positive philosophy”, which “consists precisely in following and complying with the human mind along its path, and in changing unceasingly through it and with it” (pp. i–iii). According to Laurent, besides this philosophy, which is based on the analytical and experimental method, the two most widespread tendencies in those years were: the revival of metaphysics and “moral sense” in Shaftesbury and Hume (which translated into a “religious sense independent of all religions and constituted the universal seed of an individual theosophy”) and the tendency to resolve all philosophical reflection into “theological unity” (pp. vi–vii). While obviously adhering to the positions of Locke and Condillac, Condorcet and Cabanis, Tracy and Saint-Simon, the author justifies the dedication to Cousin (follower of the “most brilliant theories

⁶Laurent mentions here, in this sequence, Socrates and Galileo, Aristotle and Petrus Ramus, Zeno, and the Englishman Algernon Sidney, a republican despite his aristocratic origin, who was accused of conspiracy and sentenced to death in 1683.

of ancient idealism”) with the fact that “the friends of justice and truth always meet in a common purpose, even if they were unfortunately separated in the choice of the means” (pp. x–xi).

Largely drawing on Degérando’s *Histoire comparée* (the author himself points out this on page 13), but also on Buhle, whose *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie* had been translated into French in 1816 (see *Models*, III, pp. 1015–1016), this *Résumé* is subdivided into nine sections or epochs, which at least in their number echo the periodisation adopted by Condorcet in his *Esquisse*: 1. “Natural or Primitive Philosophy”; 2. Oriental peoples: mystery religions and gnomic philosophy in Greece; 3. Ionic, Italic, Eleatic schools and Chinese philosophy; 4. “Physical Eleatics” (atomists, according to Degérando’s phrase), Sophists, Socrates and Plato; 5. The Lyceum and the three schools of the Hellenistic age; 6. The “moving” of Greek philosophy to Egypt and Rome; 7. The Philosophy of the Middle Ages; 8. The seventeenth century, from Cardano, Bruno, and Campanella to Locke; 9. The eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century (English, French, and German philosophers). The speculative and ideological position of the author manifests itself, for example, in his vigorous defence of the Sophists against the accusation of having practised utilitarian morals, accusations reiterated by writers like Benjamin Constant and Lamennais: in fact – observes Laurent, who feels involved in this matter – the utilitarians made it clear that “nothing is useful except that which is right, and it is this fruitful union which consolidates the guarantees in which they intended to envelop social morals. Some Sophists neglected this beneficial truth, but their individual mistake must not fall upon the school in its entirety” (pp. 105–106). Moral utilitarianism is accompanied by empiricist epistemology; hence Laurent refers to Buhle in order to claim an “experimental” and not just a speculative basis for Socrates’ reflection, in which the statement “to know not to know” is interpreted as a refusal to “trust the rational indications that are not confirmed in experience”, and the Socratic method of analysis is compared to that of the geometers, of Bacon and Condillac (this time following Degérando) (pp. 111–115).

On the other hand, Plato himself, before “sinking” into idealism, elaborated a cognitive theory which was “a mixture of Pythagorean and Eleatic rationalism with the sensualism of the Ionic physicists and the second school of Elea”, that is, the atomists. In any case, “although he was immersed in mysticism and conceded real existence only to his Ideas, Plato was close to the Ionic physicists and to the materialists of all sects, admitting the eternity of matter”; moreover, according to some commentators, he attributed an intrinsic principle of motion to matter, in an analogous way to the “doctrine of the two principles of ancient Oriental theogony” (pp. 135, 139, and 146–147). It is now evident that there is an opposition between Plato and an Aristotle totally assimilated to the empiricist tradition: thanks to the Stagirite, “the *système idéologique* indicated by Democritus and outlined by Hippocrates [we can discern Cabanis here: see above, p. 276] comes to completion. There is nothing in the mind which did not pass through the senses [...]”. Against those who see “traces of Platonism” in the necessary character of the universal, Laurent observes that for Aristotle “the universal does not cease to belong to the experimental order; it is produced through induction and it constitutes nothing other

than the general notion to which the intellect rises when it grasps (*perçoit*) by abstraction qualities that are common to particular things" (pp. 158 and 161). Within the context of ancient philosophy, an unusual comparison is made between Epicurus' attitude towards the divinities and Fénelon's quietism. Laurent is impressed by the amount of space the very successful *Abrégé des vies des anciens philosophes* had devoted to Epicurus' thought (cf. *Models*, II, p. 150), and therefore observes that for Epicurus "true piety" consists in "honouring and loving the gods in themselves, without hoping for a reward"; he thus "planted the seeds of that pure love that the disputes on quietism and the name of Fénelon made famous during the last century" (p. 185).

As for medieval thought, we can point out the judgement on Thomas Aquinas: he drew his "deep science" from the school of Alexandria, from Proclus, Saint Augustine, Averroes, and Avicenna, but "in metaphysical debates he did not bring greater clarity than his predecessors" and "his doctrine was a mixture of Platonic ideas and theological notions". The judgement on Ockham, however, is very positive: a "formidable opponent" of the Scotists, who "with their subtleties had made Scholastic philosophy sink into increasingly obscure darkness" (pp. 273–276). It is not surprising that special emphasis is placed on Bacon and above all Hobbes, supporters of those "positive doctrines" particularly needed by the human mind, because Montaigne's scepticism is not sufficient. The account, full of names and quotations, enters into more detail when it comes to the eighteenth century, especially as concerns English philosophers like Bentham. Particular praise is obviously expressed for Condillac, "who possessed bright reason and profound sagacity", and to Tracy. Degérando, Laromiguière, and Cousin remained in the "metaphysical school", while "positive philosophy" was developed by Jean-Baptiste Say, the founder of political economy in France, and by Saint-Simon and Comte.

Finally Laurent concerns himself with the German philosophers, dwelling on Basedow and Lossius. Kant, but also Fichte and Schelling, are described through Ancillon's works. The *Résumé* significantly closes with a rehabilitation of Kant as a philosopher of history, from the point of view of "social physics": indeed, the introduction to *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* (1784) contains – with reference to the "constant laws" to which human actions are subjected – some statements which, "far from being dictated by the mysticism usually attributed to Kant, are close to the positions of Condorcet and Saint-Simon"; consequently, observes Laurent triumphantly, "in recognising that moral phenomena are subject to constant laws just like natural phenomena, and that disorder and confusion in individual human beings appear to be an incessant development of the human faculties, if they are compared with the human species in its entirety, Kant has indicated the help that social physics might draw from the history of the collective development of mankind; it thus seems that he wished to take advantage of his immense ascendancy over the metaphysicians to direct them on the path of the new scientific order and effect the transition from the philosophy of the eighteenth century to that of the nineteenth" (pp. 466–470).

In the *Résumé de l'histoire de la philosophie*, published in 1826, Cousin seems a sort of fellow traveller, whose "science and personality" are honoured, although his

attitude towards Platonism and idealism is not shared (p. 251), whereas, with the advent of the Orleanist monarchy, the followers of Saint-Simon showed their definite opposition to Cousin both on a political and a philosophical plane. This is the case, for example, of Pierre Leroux (1797–1871), who after first adhering to Saint-Simonianism abandoned the movement, in 1831, taking sides against the leader Barthélemy-Prospér Enfantin. A fervent supporter of a “religion of humanity”, in which anti-Catholic religious pantheism was combined with social solidarism, in the pages of his *Réfutation de l'Éclectisme, où se trouve exposée la vraie définition de la Philosophie, et où l'on explique le sens, la suite et l'enchaînement des diverses philosophies depuis Descartes* (Paris, Gosselin, 1839; repr. Paris and Geneva, 1979) he declared himself decidedly against Cousin.

This essay (which, as it appears from the title itself, includes an outline of the history of modern philosophy) strongly criticised Cousin for having distinguished philosophy from religion and for having neglected the role of sentiment; eclecticism is accused of being “a logic absurdity” (p. vii) and of spreading a sceptical attitude among the young, to the only advantage of monarchs and the clergy. We should note that this essay had already appeared in the article *Éclectisme* of the *Encyclopédie Nouvelle, ou Dictionnaire philosophique, scientifique, littéraire et industriel, offrant le tableau des connaissances humaines au XIX^e siècle* (Paris, Gosselin, 1836–1841, 8 vols; 1839–1847, 8 vols), a work which went back to the aforementioned plan of Saint-Simon, and first came out in 1834 with the title *Encyclopédie pittoresque à deux sous*, under the direction of Leroux and Jean Reynaud, who soon broke off their alliance, however. Leroux (who only collaborated on the work up to the letter E, vol. IV) wrote several entries on ancient and modern philosophers, such as Abelard, Ammonius Saccas, Saint Augustine, Aristotle, Roger Bacon, Francis Bacon, Bayle, Bentham, Berengar of Tours, Berkeley, Saint Bonaventure, Campanella, Cardano, Carneades, Condillac, and Democritus. The entry ‘Aristote’ had been assigned to the Orientalist Salomon Munk at first, but it was not accepted by the two directors because of its Hegelian structure, so it was finally published in issue xvi of the magazine *France littéraire* (November, 1834).

With Auguste Comte (1798–1857) came a revival, albeit more systematic, of that resolution of the history of philosophy into the *histoire de l'esprit humain* which had already been outlined by Condorcet in his famous *Esquisse*. This “history of the human mind” is, in turn, oriented towards the history of the positive sciences, even towards a “philosophy of the history of the sciences”, with the object of establishing a “science of society” capable of guiding us to social progress. Within this grand picture, the history of philosophy risks losing its peculiarity and autonomy, but at the same time it is recognised in its (ancillary but essential) function of grasping the value proper to each individual philosophical doctrine in relation to its time: in other words, its purpose is to consider the role of the different doctrines over the course of humanity during the “theological” and the “metaphysical” phase, whereas in the third and last phase – the “scientific or positive” – there is no longer any progress towards science but rather a progress of science, according to a scheme which had already been employed by the Kantian historians of philosophy.

In short, we can note with Gueroult that Comte's interest in the history of philosophy depended on the fact that history *tout court* occupied a privileged place within his conception, and this "deprives the history of philosophy of its philosophical interest *a priori*, because, since the mind cannot grasp anything which exceeds phenomena, the path of philosophy should represent nothing other than the progress of positive science looking for itself and finally coming to define itself in positivism through a clear and final condemnation of metaphysics". At first glance, this conception is far from Hegelianism. Yet, because he replaces the notion of progress derived from empirical history (proper to Condorcet) with a notion which appeals to an "ineluctable progress whose law can be grasped *a priori*", Comte ends up by supporting a sort of "decapitated Hegelianism", in which "the philosophical interest disappears to the advantage of an interest in collective representation" (Gueroult, pp. 703–704). Significantly, in the *Bibliothèque du prolétaire au Dix-neuvième siècle* (a loose sheet signed by Comte and published in Paris in 1852, the year that saw the publication of the *Catéchisme positiviste*) the list of 24 works which should constitute the ideal library of proletarian homes closes with the *Biographical History of Philosophy* written by the English Comtist George Henry Lewes, originally printed in London in 1845: a clear sign of the role Comte gave the general history of philosophy, with the aim of promoting the cultural education of a new humanity (on Lewes, see below, Ch. 8).

It is not possible here to extrapolate from the sixth and final part of the *Cours de philosophie positive* (Paris, 1830–1842), which is devoted to "social physics or sociology", material to reconstruct a general history of philosophy. Within the framework provided by the law of the three states, Comte introduces a huge amount of annotations, reflections, and subperiodizations, while explicit references to ancient and modern philosophers are fragmentary and fewer: Socrates, for example, is mentioned a couple of times on the same page; the most cited thinkers are, in this order, Descartes (38 quotations), Bacon and Aristotle; following at a considerable distance are Condorcet, Leibniz, Hobbes, Newton, and Galileo. Condillac is totally absent, while Locke has the honour of receiving only three mentions. Kant is mentioned four times, Hegel only once, more precisely in a note inserted in the preface to volume VI (1842) in which Comte candidly admits that he has never read writers like "Vico, Kant, Herder, Hegel etc.", and that he knows their works only "through some indirect connection and some rather insufficient excerpts". He then clarifies: "Whatever the actual drawbacks of this intentional negligence may be, I am convinced that it considerably helped the purity and harmony of my social philosophy" (A. Comte, *Cours de philosophie positive*, Édition identique à la première, parue au commencement de Juillet 1830 (Paris 1907–1908), VI, p. xxvi, note).

At this point it may be useful to present some eloquent examples of the way in which Comte characterises the different phases of the "scientific evolution" of humanity. The first example naturally concerns Greece: historical circumstances (the practice of intense but not exclusively military activity,) gave rise to a "totally new free class, which at the time was intended as a valuable tool for the primary mental development of the elite of humanity, because it was highly speculative, although not of a priestly character, and essentially active, although not swallowed

up by war". This class of "wise men or philosophers" denoted the first appearance of the "true scientific spirit", elaborating "the simplest, most general, and most abstract ideas, that is to say, mathematical ideas, which represented the necessary cradle of rational positivism" and found in Archimedes their major specialist. The development of the other sciences, on the other hand, characterised by greater complexity, had to be postponed, despite "the high individual value shown by Aristotle's works on animals and, in previous times, also by flashes Hippocrates' unprecedented genius gave to the general study of life".

On a strictly philosophical level, Comte identifies "conspicuous traces of the secret influence of this dawning positivism, to the point that it already radically modifies the general system of theological philosophy, with a strong intervention of metaphysics"; from mathematical concepts it is therefore possible to derive the "universal ideas of order and accordance, which, despite their deeply confused and necessarily chimerical character, constitute in fact an indistinct initial presentiment of the further subordination of all phenomena to natural laws". However, the separation, during the Alexandrian age, between science and philosophy clearly manifests the inadequacies of a metaphysics which aspired to extend its influence from a strictly speculative plane to the "government of humanity" as well. These inadequacies are revealed, for example, by the "incessant progress of universal systematic doubt which induced the philosophers with frightening rapidity, from school to school, starting from Socrates up to Pyrrho and Epicurus, to negate all external existence. This curious result, which is directly incompatible with any idea of a true natural law, reveals in itself the fundamental, and developable, hostility between the metaphysical spirit and the positive spirit" (*Cours de philosophie positive*, V, pp. 131–139 [lesson LIII]. Comte appears to be very critical of Epicurus and his "moral aberrations", which have been taken up by the "main philosophical schools of the last century", and objects to any "rehabilitation" of the Greek philosopher: cf. vol. V, p. 408 [lesson LV]).

Moving on now to the "monotheistic system of the Middle Ages", which was characterised by a gradual replacement of slave labour with the work of machines (such as water mills and windmills), we can note the position held against that "frivolous philosophy that induces us to define irrationally as barbarous and dark the memorable century during which, in the different portions of the feudal and Catholic world, the writers who were shining simultaneously were Saint Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, Roger Bacon, Dante, and others". The Middle Ages represent for Comte an "eminently transitory system, whose unavoidable destiny, viewed in the context of human evolution as a whole, must be that of having prepared under its favourable protection the gradual disintegration of the purely theological and military state and the progressive ascent of the new elements of an order which was to become definitive" (V, pp. 248–249 [lesson LIV]). In this perspective, great emphasis is placed on the dispute on universals, with which "at the time the inevitable struggle of the positive spirit against the metaphysical spirit secretly began, whose main feature consisted in personifying abstractions, which, outside our intelligence, would have an exclusively nominal existence". This dispute was a remarkable advance with respect to Greek philosophy, whose schools "had never

been capable of envisaging such an elevated, and above all decisive, controversy, with the aim both of making the regime of entities collapse and half-revealing the eminently relative nature of true philosophy" (VI, pp. 156–157 [lesson LVI]).

The last example refers to modern thought and is interesting because it gives prominence to Leibniz (a writer who is greatly appreciated, for example, by Cousin as well) and because it mentions Joseph de Maistre: "[...] as science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries irreversibly separated from a short-lived philosophy, even though it did not yet become the basis for another, philosophy, for its part, increasingly isolated itself from the scientific evolution it had been leading from the third phase of the Middle Ages onwards, limited itself exclusively to a vain immediate elaboration of moral and social theories", that is to say, one that lacked any scientific basis. From this separation onwards, "no actual philosopher" has had "as his specific attribute the regular predominance of the general spirit, whatever its nature or theological direction may be, either metaphysical or positive. In this sense," continues Comte fervently, "the only rigorous one, the great Leibniz, would actually be the last modern philosopher. Indeed, no one after him, not even the celebrated Kant, despite his admirable logical power, has adequately met the conditions of philosophical generality, sufficiently in agreement with the advanced state of intellectual evolution. If the philosophy of the vigorous de Maistre was able subsequently to appear truly complete in its particular way, this is due only to the fact that the reactionary nature of this writer, which enabled him to perform a merely historical function, spontaneously dispensed him in practice from the difficult obligation of simultaneously satisfying the various heterogeneous needs [...] that are proper to modern sociality" (VI, p. 275 [lesson LVII]).

In 1843, a year after the publication of the final volume of the *Cours de philosophie positive*, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) brought out his *De la création de l'ordre dans l'humanité, ou principes d'organisation politique*. In this work, after examining religion and predicting its imminent extinction, and before presenting his "metaphysics" (which corresponds to Comte's "positive philosophy"), Proudhon devotes around 50 pages to the historical events of philosophy which, just like religion, "is everything and nothing". Indeed, since it constitutes an "effort made by intelligence to attain certainty and a rebellion of consciousness against the religious yoke", philosophy has performed a highly positive function; but since it is a "source of sophism, principle of doubt and obstinacy, contradiction and pride, and is today an instrument of despotism used by charlatans [an evident hint at Cousin], philosophy is hateful" and must therefore be fought. It is destined to come to an end because, like religion, it represents only a "particular state of consciousness and intellect" (P.-J. Proudhon, *Oeuvres complètes* [Paris, 1923–1959; repr. Geneva and Paris, 1982], V, pp. 125–126; some ideas on the history of philosophy – with reference to the path leading from Descartes' *cogito* to Hegel's *cogito* – are also contained in the *Système des contradictions économiques, ou philosophie de la misère*, in the paragraph 'De l'organisation du sens commun, ou problème de la certitude': *Oeuvres complètes*, I, pp. 161–172). Since it arose from the unjust claim of grasping a connection of causality between phenomena *a priori*, which corresponds in politics to the idea of *authority*, philosophy has always produced "vain and ineffective

theories" and all philosophers, up to the most recent ones (such as the German "pantheists", the French eclectics, and the Saint-Simonians), seem to be suffering from a "deep universal ideomania" and are "hallucinating minds" just like Joan of Arc (*Oeuvres complètes*, V, pp. 81–86).

At the end of his brief but negative reconstruction of the historical path of philosophy, which he sees as an obstacle to the establishment of true science, Proudhon formulates some considerations which indicate a full but critical awareness of the strategic role the historiography of philosophy has gradually performed, thanks in particular to eclecticism. Indeed he observes that, after amassing over the course of the centuries one system after the other, philosophy finally took the direction of questioning and knowing itself, and started to "draw up its own inventory", analysing and comparing "philosophical facts" with the Baconian method (an evident echo of Degérando). Philosophers thus become "historians, compilers, erudite scholars" and "for the first time the scientific spirit enlightens them", so that we may hope that "perhaps a philosophical science will arise from the history of philosophy". This was a vain hope according to Proudhon, because "this desperate attempt will lead to nothing", since "the destiny of philosophy" exhausts itself in "bringing the wave of the human mind to the long-desired shores of certainty and method: once the initiation is brought to completion, the initiator must die" (p. 120). The outcome of "this vast exegesis of ancient and modern philosophy" is twofold: "some saw in this incoherent mass of philosophical dreams nothing other than the testimonies of madness and impotence, and they soon threw themselves into scepticism or religion"; others, "more vigorous or more determined", perceived in this jumble of philosophical systems a "gradation" and a line of development. The "new sophists", the eclectics, thus outlined a "cycle of philosophy" which is subdivided into four periods (the pantheistic, the materialistic-spiritualistic, the sceptical-mystical, and the eclectic). On the contrary, Proudhon proposes the following order, which he considers to be more appropriate: "[1] The age of superstitions, in which philosophy approaches the religious condition, and the mind, dragged by the concept of cause, takes flight into the infinity of speculations. [2] The age of sophistry, that is, the foundation of syllogism, which represented the first regularization of judgement. [3] The age of the definition of the sciences through the observation of facts and the transformation of the syllogism into the equation [this corresponds to the advent of mathematism during the modern age]. [4] Finally, the age of philosophical autopsy [this is how he defines eclecticism], that is, the prelude to the discovery of the universal method" (pp. 121–122).

Proudhon therefore acknowledges that "the history of philosophy which was undertaken by philosophers, has revealed the secret of the changes (*révolutions*) of humanity and has raised the veil that conceals our nature. Thanks to these studies we know that the development of the individual is identical to the development of mankind", hence "it is in comparative history and legislation that we have to study the self and search for psychology". This fully discloses the "great law of history, namely, in a word, PROGRESS", which "we see burst out from the eclectic debates, just as the sun appears in the midst of the clouds chased by the gust of the north wind. Such services cannot be forgotten and are enough to justify, in the eyes of reason, the passage of philosophy". The movement of history thus advances towards

its fulfilment, preserving its double significance, the intellectual and the social: “some more efforts of intelligence and some more jolts of the popular monster will make history readable in the future as well as in the past: embracing time in its two dimensions, we will therefore start to become similar to the gods, that is, eternal” (p. 123; small capitals in the text).

Proudhon wonders now what destiny can be envisaged for philosophy on the basis of its own history. In this way, he clarifies his attitude towards eclecticism, which he appreciates for its intention to “purge the materials amassed by philosophy”; but this requires a method, and eclecticism resolves itself completely into searching for this method. This method, which results from “comparing sciences and methods”, must necessarily be universal and absolute, but does not lead to a “universal science” arranged according to “only one principle, only one cause, only one fact”, so that philosophy is turned into a “pansophy” (here Proudhon gives some examples: the “great systems of German philosophy” and, for France, “the audacious syntheses” of Azaïs, Lamennais, Saint-Simon, and Fourier). For Proudhon, the idea of a universal science is in fact “an impracticable chimera, almost a contradiction in terms”, because “the invention of the universal method will have as its immediate result the division of the remains of philosophical authority and the constitution – with its disjointed fragments – of as many special and regular sciences” (pp. 123–125). From this point of view, the establishment of the general history of philosophy preludes the end of philosophy itself, which at this point is surpassed by the advent of the sciences.

(d) *Apologetic and religiously inspired historiography*

Catholic-inspired thought of the first decade of the century went from anti-philosophism (aimed at the eighteenth-century *philosophes* and their successors) to anti-philosophy *tout court*. The critical attitude towards philosophy continues to exist in the following years, but without Bonald or Lamennais’ violent and resentful tones, and it attempted to claim the value and necessity of Revelation rather than radically contrasting reason with faith. Here, we can point out the significant writings of the jurist Jean-Baptiste-Claude Riambourg (1776–1836), *président de chambre* at Dijon who resigned after the July revolution: *L’École d’Athènes, ou Tableau des variations et contradictions de la philosophie ancienne* (Paris, Société catholique des bons livres, 1829), pp. xl–242, and *Du Rationalisme et de la Tradition, ou Coup d’oeil sur l’état actuel de l’opinion philosophique et de l’opinion religieuse en France* (Paris, E. Bricon, 1834), pp. 252. The two volumes were reprinted posthumously, together with a series of articles published in periodicals during the years 1828–1833 and collected under the title *L’École de Paris*, in the *Oeuvres philosophiques* de M. le Président Riambourg, *publiées par* MM. Th. Foisset et l’Abbé S. Foisset, *ancien supérieur de Séminaire* (Paris, Debécourt, 1837), 3 vols. In *L’École d’Athènes*, the author imagines that the characters of Raphael’s famous fresco come alive and start a discussion, until Anacharsis (who conceals the author) sees the “horrible confusion” produced by the “clash of so many different opinions” and intervenes to “engage humanity to ask religion for that which philosophy appears to be unable to give” (*Oeuvres philosophiques*, I, p. 184).

In *Rationalisme et Tradition*, the author outlines the history of rationalism, which originated in Egypt as an esoteric doctrine that could replace the revealed doctrines of the Hebrews and then spread to Greece through the mystery religion and Pythagoras (whereas for Riambourg the Hebrew tradition influenced Zoroaster and Lao Tzu). Reaching its complete development with the Greek schools, ancient rationalism did not succeed in grasping the “primordial truths” and came to an end with scepticism and eclecticism. “After sleeping for a long time”, it gradually reappeared on the public scene, first advancing “in parallel with faith” (with Scholasticism), then “venturing to lose contact with it” (with Descartes), and finally breaking with it definitively in the course of the eighteenth century. Once it was exhausted, rationalism could only “withdraw”, and this reversed movement is already half-revealed by French contemporary philosophy, in which “some have launched into eclecticism and the wisest into the Scottish school”, while “others are wandering on the wave of indefinite progress” (III, pp. 264–265). The three schools into which the *École de Paris* – a modern equivalent of the *École d'Athènes* – is subdivided are therefore the eclectic, the Scottish (represented by Théodore Jouffroy), and the “progressive or Saint-Simonian”. The verdict on these trends, however, is critical: indeed, the meeting of the different systems advocated by eclecticism is impossible because by its very nature rationalism is inclined to contrast philosophical doctrines rather than to unite them; as for the Scottish school, the theme of God and the human soul exceeds its range and would require recourse to Revelation, which is impeded by “pride”; finally, the theory of indefinite progress “is a religion preached with enthusiasm but received without any analysis” and lacks all foundation, because history discloses the past, not the future, and shows at most that there is no progress outside Christianity. In conclusion, reason and faith must renew their ancient pact, because “the Church asks for a reasonable faith, not a blind one”; as for the “ghost of the Middle Ages evoked by rationalism”, when we speak of the Christian religion, explains Riambourg, “Christianity and the Middle Ages are two different things” (III, pp. 269–270).

With the advent of Louis-Philippe, the spread of the history of philosophy as a consequence of making Cousin's eclecticism a *philosophie d'État*, induced the Catholic world to enter the lists and produce manuals of the general history of philosophy intended both for the courses held in the *collèges* and for ecclesiastical seminaries. This is the case of the *Précis de l'histoire de la philosophie* – published by the two directors of the *collège* of Juilly, Louis-Antoine de Salinis (1798–1861, the future bishop of Amiens and then archbishop of Auch) and the *abbé* Bruno-Dominique de Scorbiac – whose subtitle reads as follows: *Ouvrage adopté par l'Université de France, pour l'enseignement dans les Collèges, les Institutions et les Pensionnats* (Paris, Hachette, 1834), pp. viii-424 (Brussels, Société Belge de librairie, 1845; 1847; 1853).⁷ Their educational aim is clearly explained in the ‘Avertissement’: for 6 years the teaching of philosophy in the *collège* of Juilly had

⁷The paternity of this work was also attributed to *abbé* Philippe Gerbet (1798–1864); cf. L. Besson, ‘Étude sur la vie et les oeuvres de M^{re} Gerbet, évêque de Perpignan’, *Annales Franc-Comtoises. Revue historique et littéraire*, III (1865), pp. 432–453; 433–434; Ch. Hamel, *Histoire de l'Abbaye et du Collège de Juilly, depuis leur origine jusqu'à nos jours*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1868), pp. 459–461; A. Ricard, *L'École Menaisienne. Gerbet, Salinis et Rohrbacher*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1886), p. 57.

consisted of a historical part and a theoretical part; the *Précis* proceeded from the material collected in the intervening time by the teacher, and its purpose was “to examine the itinerary of philosophy through the various epochs and the derivation of ideas, and by this means to provide the pupils with an amount of positive notions the teacher can use as a basis for his explanations” (*Précis*, ed. 1845, pp. 5–7). The religious inspiration of this textbook appears in quite moderate terms from the concise ‘Réflexions préliminaires. Idées chrétiennes sur l’origine de la science’ (pp. 9–11), where the authors hint at a “primitive science” which God revealed to our ancestors and which went astray as a consequence of original sin, but whose traces, are “most likely” contained in the very old philosophy of the Veda (p. 11). Hence the large amount of space devoted to Indian thought (which is here defended against the accusation of pantheism) and to Oriental philosophy in general, which constitutes the first epoch of philosophy. The second epoch comprises Greek philosophy, subdivided into two “evolutions”: from the Ionians to the Sophists and from Socrates to Sextus Empiricus. The “philosophy of the early centuries of the Christian era” represents the third period, followed by the fourth (“philosophy of the Middle Ages”, subdivided into three epochs, according to the traditional framework) and the fifth, which embraces the “modern philosophical movement”. This consists of a first phase (the 15th and 16th centuries) and a second phase (the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), which is in turn made up of two parts: (a) from Bacon to Hume and from Descartes to Wolff; (b) Kant (together with Jacobi, Reinhold, Fichte) and the Scottish school.

In the *Précis*, the treatment of the individual thinkers generally follows a definite scheme (“historical notions”, “an account of the systems”, “observations”). Plato is not immune from this “account of the systems”, even though it is brief: first the theory of Ideas, then the “theory of things” following a rigorous order (God, creation, cosmology, anthropology, logic, morals, politics, and the future life). The balanced tone of the manual is demonstrated, for example, by the references to Thomas Aquinas and by the way in which Kant is presented. In the first case, the emphasis is laid on the “wonderful logical chain” that unites all the parts of the *Summa theologiae*, but it is also observed that “the language spoken in Aquinas’ intellectual world is very different from modern scientific language. In order to orient ourselves in this world and move about in it, it is necessary first of all to learn the vocabulary of this language” (p. 265). Similarly balanced is the description of Kant, even though the resulting image is reductive and does not adequately emphasize the novelty of transcendental philosophy. Indeed, Kant is compared to the “three great schools” of Descartes, Bacon, and Leibniz, and ends up by seeming to have conformed to them. Like Descartes, he placed psychology at the basis of his enquiry, but finally “locked himself into a frame of purely subjective ideas, from which he could only escape, in his theory of practical reason, by forcing the principles established in the theory of pure reason”. On the other hand, though he distanced himself from Bacon’s “sensualism”, Kant ended up by coming back to it again thanks to the anti-metaphysical results of his philosophy. As for Leibniz, Kant took up his “idealistic tendency”, forcing nature to adopt the laws that are proper to the soul, even though according to Leibniz “the soul is representative of external

reality”, something which Kant denied because “everything that man can affirm is to be placed in a world of appearances which he combines according to the laws of his own reason” (pp. 358–359). His verdict on the Scottish school, finally, is colourful: he reproaches it for having the opposite fault to that of the “modern metaphysicians” who, especially in Germany, “have indulged in a philosophical intemperance which disregards the bounds of the human mind”, thus resembling a “man who gets drunk under the pretext that drinking is necessary”. If anything, the Scottish school is guilty of an “excess of caution”, as though it were dominated by a “mania for sobriety. However, thanks to its stable and practical common sense, it has been useful at least to counterbalance the licence of speculation” (p. 373).

The path outlined by Salinis’ and Scorbac’s *Précis* (and the *Historia philosophiae a mundi incunabulis usque ad Salvatoris adventum, hodierno discentium usui accommodata*, printed in Leuven in 1832 by the Belgian prelate and historian Pierre-François-Xavier de Ram, who in 1834 was to become the first head of the new Catholic University of Belgium) is explicitly followed by the theologian Jean-Baptiste Bouvier (1783–1854), bishop of Le Mans from 1834, with his *Histoire abrégée de la philosophie, à l’usage des élèves des séminaires et des collèges* (Le Mans, Monnoyer, 1841), 2 vols, pp. x–452 and 640.⁸ Presented as a “complement” to the philosophical handbook published in Latin several years before – *Institutiones philosophicae, ad usum seminariorum et collegiorum* (Cenomani [= Le Mans], Monnoyer, 1824), 3 vols – this work responded to the need to adapt the courses held in Catholic schools to the new cultural climate in which it had become impossible to ignore the historical context (we must also remember that, from 1840 onwards, the Catholics launched an increasingly fierce attack against Cousin’s philosophical monopoly in the name of the freedom to teach). The purpose of this manual “is neither to conduct an in-depth analysis nor to compare the different systems of philosophy with one another”, but only to “state the facts and describe in its essentials what philosophy has been from its very origin up to now, so that we can form a precise idea of it” and therefore reach a “justifiable mistrust” of the “helpless efforts” made by so many sublime minds, thus awaking the “need for an authority which may insure us against mistakes” (*Hist. abrégée*, I, pp. I and v–vi).

The philosophical position that constitutes Bouvier’s starting point is related to the so-called *philosophia Lugdunensis* or *philosophie de Lyon*, an adaptation of Cartesianism to Catholic theology which became widespread in French ecclesiastical seminaries thanks to the *Institutiones philosophicae* by the Oratorian Joseph Valla, published in 1782 and subsequently reprinted several times. This tendency is evident in the eleventh and last book of the *Histoire abrégée* which is devoted to an ‘Analysis of Catholic philosophy as contrasted to the philosophical systems of all ages’ (II, pp. 455–632). This analysis starts from the clarity of the “inner sense, which warns us about the present state of our soul” (II, p. 463), then continues by presenting the usual treatment of logic, ontology, theodicy, and morals. “Lyon

⁸Bouvier rose to fame in the ecclesiastical world thanks to his *Institutiones theologicae* (1834), which were used almost universally in French and North American seminaries and reached their fifteenth edition in 1880.

philosophy” was against a revival of Thomism, and Bouvier’s verdict on Scholasticism is indeed totally negative, reproducing the most traditional cliché about it: Scholasticism was characterised less by the search for truth than by the “art of quibbling and debating endlessly” and it “muddled” the interpretation of the Scriptures rather than clarifying it, thus bringing about a “distortion of religious mysteries”; in conclusion, “the disorder of thought in Scholastic thinkers or the fruitlessness from which they were suffering induced them to use such barbarous language that their works are often unintelligible” (I, pp. 386–389). The historical treatment, which is developed with systematic clarity (the presentation of each philosopher is accompanied by short biographical notes, a list of his major works, and a summary of their thought), starts from the “philosophy of the Hebrews from the beginning of the world until Jesus Christ” and from the philosophy of the “Oriental nations” (which also includes the Celts), following the usual periodisation. In the tenth book (II, pp. 371–453) we can note the complex classification of contemporary French philosophers: 1. “Materialist ideologists and other unbelievers”; 2. “Spiritualist physiologists”, like Hyacinthe Azaïs; 3. “Spiritualist philosophers who do not rest on faith” (Laromiguière, Maine de Biran, Degérando, B. Constant); 4. “Philosophers who rest on faith” (Portalis, Maistre, Bonald, Lamennais, Ballanche); 5. “Eclectic philosophers”; 6. “New economists” (Say, Sismondi...); 7. “School of the indefinite progress or new pantheism” (Saint-Simon, Leroux, Fourier...).

Compared with the two volumes written by Bouvier, the *Résumé de l’histoire de la philosophie, à l’usage des séminaires et des collèges*, par M. l’Abbé E[ustache] B[arbe], *professeur de philosophie* (Paris, J. Lecoffre, 1845, 12°, p. 159) is rather slim; the frontispiece facing the title page describes the work as an “outline of a more extensive work”, which was actually brought out the following year by the same publisher under the title *Cours élémentaire de philosophie à l’usage des établissements d’éducation, mis en rapport avec les questions du Programme universitaire pour l’examen du baccalauréat ès Lettres, et comprenant l’histoire de la philosophie* (18°, pp. 745) and was republished several times (5th ed. 1872; the part of the manual devoted to the history of philosophy [pp. 497–729] was also printed separately: *Histoire de la philosophie, à l’usage des établissements d’éducation*, Paris, Lecoffre, 1846; 3rd ed. 1866). The abbé Barbe – who was later to edit Fénelon’s *Oeuvres philosophiques* (1866) – subdivides his history of philosophy into three periods: ancient philosophy, from Oriental philosophy to the Fathers, ending with Cassiodorus and the “transition” to the Middle Ages; the “philosophy of the Middle Ages”, embracing the “transition” to modern philosophy; and modern philosophy, terminating with the “German school”, that is to say, Kant (who is presented briefly following Cousin’s *Leçons sur la philosophie de Kant*). The apologetic tone is moderate, as we can see in the final reflections: the history of philosophy has brought about positive results (a knowledge of the principles of logic, the rules of method, observations concerning the human faculties), “but philosophers are still discussing matters which are rightly called the vital questions of man”. This is an unmistakable sign of the “weakness of our reason”, and “if we do not wish to slide

into a more or less absolute scepticism, we must base ourselves on an agreement between reason and faith” (pp. 728–729).⁹

Nicolas-Sylvestre Guillon (1759–1847), a professor of sacred eloquence at the Theological Faculty in Paris and almoner of the Queen of the French, who had risen to the rank of titular bishop of Morocco, wrote a work which was not conceived of as a teaching aid: *Histoire générale de la philosophie ancienne et moderne jusqu'à nos jours, ou Supplément à la "Bibliothèque des Pères grecs et latins"* (Paris, Depélafole, 1835), 2 vols, 8°, pp. 562 and 549. Guillon, who had been a supporter of Napoleon and had welcomed the revolution of 1830, had started his very long career as a scholar and cleric in the remote year 1788 with his *Mélanges de littérature orientale*, and among other things he also published the *Entretiens sur le suicide, ou Courage philosophique opposé au courage religieux, et Réfutation des principes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, de Montesquieu, de Madame de Staël, etc., en faveur du suicide* (Paris, 1802). Brought out in the same year in which Guillon published his *Histoire de la nouvelle hérésie du XIX^e siècle, ou Réfutation complète des ouvrages de l'abbé de La Mennais*, this *Histoire générale de la philosophie*, as we can see from the subtitle, was intended as a complement to the 26 volumes of the *Bibliothèque choisie des Pères de l'Église grecque et latine, ou Cours d'éloquence sacrée* (Paris, 1822–1828) and represented another indication of the specific interest in the history of philosophy shown by the Catholic world.

We can see the Patristic principle behind the work in the motto “*Summus philosophiae finis religio*” printed on the front page, which was taken from a letter by Descartes and is clearly illustrated in the final pages. Guillon does not describe himself as a historian of philosophy strictly speaking, but as a scholar of the Fathers, who, after examining the historical course of human thought, has reached a negative verdict: “Guided in the labyrinth of systems by the thread handed to us by its

⁹The manual closes with a ‘Table’ on the parallels between the different parts of the *Cours* and the “questions” of the official curriculum for the baccalaureate of Humanities. Of 50 questions in all, the last ten concern the history of philosophy (*Cours élémentaire*, p. 745). We quote them below because they indicate the *standard* of knowledge in the field of the history of philosophy which was required by the official curricula: “41. Which method should be adopted for the history of philosophy? [cf. pp. 501–503: a “mixed method”, i.e. “ethnographic” or according to nations, “systematic”, “chronological”; the echo of Cousin is evident here]; 42. Into how many general epochs can we divide the history of philosophy?; 43. Knowledge of the main schools of Greek philosophy before Socrates should be widely diffused; 44. Knowledge of Socrates and the nature of the philosophical revolution of which he was the author should be widely diffused; 45. Knowledge of the main Greek schools after Socrates up to the end of the school of Alexandria should be widely diffused; 46. Who are the major Scholastic philosophers?; 47. What is Bacon’s method? Provide an analysis of the *Novum Organum*; 48. What is Descartes’ method? Provide an analysis of the *Discours de la méthode*; 49. The main modern schools after Bacon and Descartes should be widely diffused; 50. What advantages can we derive from the history of philosophy for the sake of philosophy itself? [cf. pp. 725–728, where three advantages are mentioned: a) the history of philosophy makes us appreciate the principles through their consequences (Locke’s empiricism, for example, can be better grasped through the developments it went through in Hume: this is another idea typical of Cousin); b) being accustomed to comparing various systems, none of which is absolute, protects us against error; c) helping to make philosophy a more detailed discipline thanks to the contacts with the doctrines of the great philosophers of the past]”.

historians themselves [that is to say the historians of philosophy: among the authors mentioned in the work there are Brucker, Degérando, and Cousin], we have gone through its annals". The result of this enquiry: "Modern philosophy has brought us back to the starting point where the world was before the evangelic revelation", but "ancient philosophy, as is admitted [= by the historians themselves], was nothing but the endless object of debate, doubt, and useless research. At least it had the good faith to admit to this, and through Socrates' pupil [Plato] it found a gleam of light from above, so as to compensate for its powerlessness. The forty centuries of paganism before Christianity were subject to the most invincible ignorance. The Gospel alone was able to shine a light through this dark night. The Fathers were its inspired interpreters and added nothing to the revelation it had brought to the world; they did nothing but explain it. The Scholastics nurtured the idea of going further and wished to illuminate it with a human torch. Then came Descartes, he blew on Scholasticism and dissolved it".¹⁰

But the school founded by Descartes was also destroyed by criticism, which was then aimed at Bacon and Locke... Nevertheless, observes Guillon, despite all the failures it has gone through, philosophy today can claim, in the voice of "modern reformers", that it can offer hope and certitude as an alternative to religion; instead of waging war against Christianity, as happened during the previous century, it now aims to replace it with a "Christian eclecticism", that is to say, "a new Gospel it presents to a trusting and faithful youth", thus removing it from the true "sources of life" (from which the Fathers derived their philosophy) "and pushing it, according to the words of the Gospel, into muddy cisterns". Just like ancient philosophy, the new philosophy reveals it is "devoid of principles and methods"; it leads to the wrong road or back to the starting point. "What do our present-day eclectics teach? Nothing other than scepticism covered up (*fardé*) with Platonism" (II, pp. 519–520). It is therefore clear why this general history of philosophy is divided into two large parts (before and after Christianity) and ends with Cousin, of whom we are given a very clear portrait: "His career, his successes, the works he has published, and the variety of different judgements he has given rise to have focused public attention on him. His improvisations, frequently successful, have given him the air of inspired expression, and they have stirred and roused the minds. He went forward every day and he changed as he proceeded, he merged Aristotle and Pythagoras, Kant and Hegel, Reid and Condillac: eclectic and sceptical at the same time, his teaching was far from presenting a unitary system, and still farther from formulating clear and precise ideas, which could be grasped by every intelligence". His psychology is

¹⁰ *Hist. générale*, II, pp. 516–517; we can note that Guillon (I, pp. 265–562) devotes a lot of space to Christian thought from its origins up to Boethius: almost 300 pages, whereas Oriental and Greek philosophy occupy 200 pages; about 90 pages are devoted to Scholasticism, 200 to "modern philosophy" (subdivided into geographical areas: the author also mentions Italy [from the Renaissance to Ruggero Boscovich], Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Holland, and Savoy), and 224 to seventeenth and eighteenth-century philosophy, which includes a survey of French authors of the first half of the nineteenth century. As for his negative opinion of Scholasticism, it is accompanied by a more general lack of appreciation for the Middle Ages ("Tout le moyen âge, si fort exalté par les écrivains de nos jours, ne fut que la longue éclipse de l'intelligence humaine": II, p. 236).

uncertain and arbitrary, just like his theology, which is imbued with pantheism. The basic defect of this system and of other similar systems was once denounced by Lactantius: “We expect from the earth that which the earth cannot give” (II, pp. 512–513 and 515).

(e) *A Krausian history of philosophy: Guillaume Tiberghien*

In 1841, the *Université Libre* of Brussels – which had been founded a few years before, in 1835, and had connections with Masonic circles – announced a philosophical competition the subject of which was: “Present the main philosophical systems on the origin of ideas and show how each of these systems is necessarily related to a whole series of moral, political, and religious doctrines”. The award was given in 1842 to a Belgian student, Guillaume Tiberghien (1819–1901), who took a degree in philosophy the following year and from 1846 taught various disciplines at the *Université Libre* (among which the history of philosophy) until he retired (1897). Tiberghien, who had been initiated into the philosophical doctrines of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause by the teachers of the *Université Libre* (such as Jean-Jacques Altmeyer, Heinrich Ahrens, and Theodor Schliephake),¹¹ remained faithful to the German philosopher, and it is precisely through his works that Krausianism was to become widespread in Spain. The first of these works designed to propagate Krause’s thought was the dissertation which had won the *Université Libre*’s prize and it was subsequently published under the title *Essai théorique et historique sur la génération des connaissances humaines dans ses rapports avec la morale, la politique et la religion; développement du mémoire couronné par le jury du concours universitaire institué par le Gouvernement, par Guillaume Tiberghien, candidat en philosophie et en droit, élève de l’Université de Bruxelles* (Brussels, Th. Lesigne, 1844), 4°, vol. 1, 2 tomes, pp. iv–818. Among Tiberghien’s mature works, let us also mention the *Introduction à la philosophie et préparation à la métaphysique. Étude analytique sur les objets fondamentaux de la science, critique du positivisme* (Brussels, 1868; 2nd ed. 1880), which also concerns the history of philosophy, and *Le commandement de l’humanité, ou la Vie morale sous forme de catéchisme populaire, d’après Krause* (Brussels, 1872).

Preceded by an ‘Avant-propos’ (pp. i–iv) and an ‘Introduction’ (pp. 1–45), the *Essai théorique et historique*, as it appears from the title itself, is divided into two

¹¹ The Dane Ahrens, who had studied in Göttingen, was expelled from Germany in 1830 for political reasons, had delivered a series of lectures at the *Collège de France*, and in Paris in 1838 had published a *Cours de philosophie* and a *Cours de philosophie de l’histoire* (cf. Gueroult, p. 745, footnote, where the author points out Ahrens’ role as a propagator of German philosophy in France). Altmeyer, in turn, had published in Brussels an *Introduction à l’étude philosophique de l’histoire de l’humanité* (1837), a *Précis de l’histoire ancienne, envisagée sous le point de vue politique et philosophique*, and a *Cours de philosophie de l’histoire* (1840). As regards Krause, whose “pantheism” (different both from deism and from pure pantheism) brings us back to the climate of philosophical romanticism, in particular Schelling, it is to be noted that his *Vorlesungen über die Grundwahrheiten der Wissenschaft* (Göttingen, 1829) also contain a historico-philosophical treatment (pp. 243–491) which was later published separately under the title *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1887) (see above, pp. 142–143).

parts, one theoretical ('De la génération des connaissances humaines', pp. 47–134) and one, much longer, historical ('Exposition des principaux systèmes philosophiques sur l'origine des connaissances humaines', pp. 135–814). The prevalence of the historical structure is justified by the conviction that in order to present a philosophical system in a complete way you must take into consideration "the influence of the general character of its epoch, its origin, and also its results", since "a doctrine frequently has no other reason for existence than the time in which it is born" (p. III). On the other hand, observes the young Tiberghien, "history is not an account or an amalgam of facts and dates", and the account of a philosophical system should be linked to an evaluation of it, which requires a criterion by which we can distinguish between the truth or falsity of a doctrine: hence the historical account must be preceded by a theoretical one, which here is obviously inspired by Krause's philosophy, presented here through Ahrens' *Cours de philosophie*.

In the 'Introduction', Tiberghien presents the philosophical view which underpins his general history of philosophy: it revolves around the notion of Humanity as a "being that lives in itself and for itself", embracing all the separate individuals while remaining distinct from each of them, just as God is "a being superior to the world, although he encloses it and imbues it with his essence" (this is Krause's "panentheism"). In this perspective philosophy is "the manifestation of humanity's intelligence", "with the numerous retinue of the sciences meeting together under its banner". Philosophy reflects the entire reality of what exists, "its organism is the symbol of the universal organism. In it humanity can still understand itself, rise to a consciousness of itself, and reveal the concatenation and completeness of its intellectual life". The philosophy of history represents "the product of this consciousness of humanity"; it makes humanity understand "its past life, its present state, and the end it aims at" (pp. 28–29).

Similarly, the will and action of humanity become manifest in political history, in which "we see the spectacle of the triumphal march of humanity through innumerable obstacles and its gravitation towards the future". Philosophy and political history are therefore "two complementary phases of the life of humanity", and since the latter is an "eminently reasonable being", it follows that "the application always comes after the theory, the idea always precedes the fact. [...] This constant harmony is not the result of fatality but is the consequence of logic or, if you wish, of the organism of the human mind" (p. 30; a few pages above, on p. 24, Tiberghien had criticised Vico's "fatalistic system", according to which "humanity perpetually revolves in a circle"). So therefore, "if it has been verified that philosophy prepares the facts of history, it is also certain that we have to learn the science of future things from the *philosophical tendencies* [italics in the text] of our epoch". The laws governing the development of humanity are the same as those of any other being; hence, by examining the development of humanity in the previous epochs and its present results, we can come to know the advances of the future with a mathematical degree of certainty. Three are the "universal laws of life" to which humanity, as a "living being", is also subject, and which correspond to the phases of development of each individual: *unity*, *variety*, and *harmony*, corresponding, respectively, to the "instinctive state", the appearance of the different faculties, and reason, which completes

the development of the human faculties and keeps them in balance. These are the laws underlying the new philosophy of history, which aims at overcoming the “abstract formulas” now in force (such as the union of the finite and the infinite, the struggle of freedom against despotism, etc.), in order to “go back to the notion of life itself” (pp. 30–32).

Tiberghien then examines the philosophical trends of his time which appear to be in accord with the general tendency of modern philosophy and are therefore characterised by the rejection of dogmatism and “exclusive systems” and the prevalence of rationalism. In France, for example, we can see the spread of eclecticism, which constitutes an “imperfect and individual rationalism” and denotes the need to attain a “general formula under which all theories can be harmonically assembled”: but eclecticism is unable to satisfy this need because it proceeds blindly and uncertainly, “it does not possess any criterion of truth and certainty”, and is therefore “a doctrine of transition” (p. 36). Germany has gone farther in line with rationalism, throwing itself “audaciously into the realms of the infinite and the absolute”. To those who have a prejudice against German philosophy because of its pantheism and idealism, Tiberghien responds that this philosophy has found its “fulfilment” in Krause’s thought, who has gone farther than Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, projecting Germany into the “period of *harmony*”, to which the whole of humanity is called. Indeed, unlike pantheism, which represents only the infancy of rationalism, Krause’s doctrine is grounded “on a higher and richer unity, [...] where unity is not identity or absolute indifference; it embraces the whole formula of being and existence in *unity*, *variety* [meaning individuality and spontaneity], and *harmony*”: it is therefore a “supreme unity”, which does not cancel individuality and freedom (pp. 37–38, italics ours; see also p. 629, where the author identifies three different epochs in German contemporary thought: a “critical and analytical” epoch, that is, Kant and his school; an “organic and synthetic” epoch, which aims at grasping absolute reality through immediate intuition [Schelling and Hegel]; and a “syncretic” epoch preparing Krause’s thought, which opens the period of *harmony*). These philosophical principles are related to the social “formula” put forward by Krause and his followers, which surpasses both “exclusive individualism” and “communism”, that is to say, the absolute uniformity resulting from pantheism (he is referring here to Saint-Simon, Owen, and Fourier). The principle of *unity*, represented by the “supreme authority”, is therefore correlated to the social community; the principle of *variety* (from which religion, law, science, morals, the arts, and industry derive) is correlated to individuality and freedom; and the principle of *harmony*, which constitutes the basis of “social science”, is correlated to a “free and egalitarian association” (p. 44).

Krause’s system – declares Tiberghien in the final pages – represents the climax of the entire social development of humanity: like a ‘true reformer’, the German philosopher does not abolish the great social institutions (marriage, family, religion) but imbues them with a new spirit; he does not preach “an emancipation of matter or of the flesh” (p. 813), but intends to free the new slaves of industrial work, which damages their health without saving them from misery and moral degradation. Within this framework of theoretical principles and humanitarian ideals, which

truly reflects the fervent climate of those years, Tiberghien divides the historical course of philosophy into two major epochs, which seem to echo the periodisation outlined by Ritter: “Ancient philosophy” and “Philosophy after the advent of Christianity”. The first epoch occupies three chapters, on Oriental philosophy (Indian, Chinese, and Persian philosophies: pp. 135–159), Greek philosophy (pp. 160–326), and Alexandrian or “Graeco-Oriental” philosophy (the latter chapter is very short: pp. 327–332). Greek philosophy is subdivided into three periods: from Thales to the Sophists; from Socrates to Epicurus; and scepticism. After Socrates the central period is subdivided into three phases reflecting the course of life: 1. “Education” (minor Socratic schools); 2. “Organisation” (Plato and Aristotle); and 3. “Decline” (Stoicism and Epicureanism). The second great epoch is also structured into three chapters: Ch. I (pp. 333–396) is devoted to “Christian Philosophy” (section 1: “The Fathers”; section 2: “Philosophy of the Middle Ages”); Ch. II (pp. 397–684) deals with modern philosophy; Ch. III (pp. 685–814) is entirely devoted to Krause’s thought and was also published separately: *Exposition du système philosophique de Krause* (Brussels, Th. Lesigne, 1844). Modern philosophy, in turn, is divided into three periods: 1. The “Period of education”, which concerns the “Philosophy of the Renaissance” and is treated very briefly (pp. 403–405); 2. The “Period of methodical development”, subdivided into “Sensualistic development” (from Bacon to Hume and Condillac), “Spiritualistic development” (Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza), and “Rationalistic development” (Leibniz); and 3. The “Period of relative harmony”, divided into the “Scottish School” (Reid) and the “Rationalistic school” (Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel).

Here we cannot examine Tiberghien’s reconstruction of the history of philosophy in detail. It adopts Krause’s organicistic criterion and, in the case of the writers treated at greater length, follows a definite pattern (an account of the thought; the “consequences”; and “critical judgement”). We will limit ourselves here to offering a few examples of his rather schematic way of proceeding. As we have seen above, Aristotle was followed by an epoch of decline, of “old age”, whose “first degree” is represented by Stoicism. Now, “Stoicism constitutes, in some respects, a necessary advance in the progression of Greek philosophy. Aristotle had resolved the transcendence of Plato’s idea into immanence, thus bringing human consciousness closer to the gravitational centre of philosophy, but he let immanence possess a markedly real and objective nature. Since then, a step still had to be taken on the path towards truth, that is, replacing real immanence with subjective immanence. This is what was undertaken by Stoicism. Subjectivism is the general expression of this system”. With Stoicism, “sensualism started to emerge under protection of reason, which is a general indication of philosophical decline”. The “second degree” of this decline is Epicureanism which, with respect to Stoicism, “views morals from a lower perspective” and intensifies sensualism. Finally, scepticism “corresponds to the third degree of dissolution, namely death, that is to say the prelude to a new era, richer and more complete, which opens up leading to Alexandrian philosophy” (p. 285). This, instead of going over the entire course of Greek philosophy to build a more rigorous science, followed the path of “syncretic dogmatism”, leaving the task of refounding science to posterity (p. 328).

Among modern philosophers, particular emphasis is given to Leibniz, who is considered to be a forerunner of Krause. His system is “an exemplar of harmonic or higher rationalism; in all orders of things he reconciles absolute *unity* with the *variety* of individual existences [...]. He was the first to lay down the principle of individuality with clarity and try to harmonize it scientifically with the existence of an infinite and absolute Being, without incorporating these terms into one another”. This problem, which had been foreign to the ancient world, was perceived but not solved by the Christian philosophers, while in the modern age the “sensualistic school” tried to reduce the infinite to the finite and the Cartesian school had the opposite aim. Leibniz was the only one who maintained both terms, since he considered “monads as living, indestructible, individual forces, as finite and contingent substances implying an infinite and absolute substance [...]. The superiority of Leibniz’ system lies in this relationship between God and finite beings [monads] [...]. But Leibniz did not grasp the real nature of this relationship, which is a relationship of a being with a being, of an essence with an essence”. Indeed, between individual beings and the infinite Being he did not establish a “relationship of penetration and life, as Spinoza had done”. Spinoza conceived of individual beings as modes of the absolute substance (pp. 589–591). In the case of pre-established harmony too, Leibniz did not dig deeply, limiting himself to “solving Cartesian dualism and showing the unity and the power of substance”, without managing to rise to the “great conception of the harmony of beings, which is not based on will [here Krause’s panentheism appears again], but on the very nature of God” (p. 595). In short, Leibniz was both “the great representative of the philosophy of the past [embodied by Plato] and the vanguard of the philosophy of the future” (p. 592).

The *Essai théorique et historique* has the qualities and faults typical of a “first work”: in the first place a relationship of intense admiration and dependence on the “masters”, which was intensified by the prophetic and religious atmosphere which characterised Krause’s followers. We must note, however, that the young Tiberghien interprets Krause’s view of history from a ‘French’ perspective, centred on a notion of progress which is closer to Cousin and Guizot (the latter is explicitly mentioned on p. 29) than to Krause himself or Schelling (who conceived of progress as a return to the lost innocence of the origins). This juvenile fervour, not devoid of naivety, was offset by Tiberghien’s constant and meticulous use of the latest critical literature, and, reading between the lines, his lengthy treatment shows a considerably updated picture of French philosophical historiography, which was undergoing a great expansion in that period. Ritter’s French translation is used a lot for ancient and late antique philosophy, and when discussing Aristotle Tiberghien also uses the first volume of Ravaisson’s *Essai sur la métaphysique d’Aristote* (1837). Less frequent is recourse – once again in the treatment of ancient philosophy – to Degérando and Cousin, and for Plato Tiberghien also refers to Schliephake’s university courses. Rousselot and Cousin are the writers he mentions most in explaining the Middle Ages (though, he also refers to Hegel’s lessons on the history of philosophy for Raymond Lull: p. 382). Descartes is examined following Bouillier, while in the case of Hegel Tiberghien expressly declares (p. 679) that he has followed “the clear and easy account of Monsieur Barchou de Penhoën”, about whom see below, section

(g). In the case of Plato and Aristotle direct sources are used (Augustine is quoted at length via Ritter) and several modern philosophers (Bacon, Descartes, Locke, Hume, but especially Malebranche, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Reid; as for Kant, Tiberghien mentions the *Critique of Pure Reason*). The *Essai théorique et historique* is therefore a classical work for schools, although it clearly shows the central role played by the history of philosophy in the culture of the time.

(f) *The eclectic school: the philosophy of history and the text books on the history of philosophy*

Quality does not usually mean quantity. However, in the case of the impressive number of pupils and followers of Cousin, it has been recognised that “their works show a historical consciousness and a philosophical insight that are often greater than those of their master” (Gueroult, p. 737). Among them, the most outstanding personality of the 1820s and the 1840s was Théodore Jouffroy, who replaced Cousin in 1830 as professor of the history of modern philosophy and was struck down by tuberculosis at the age of 46. The inaugural lecture of his course in the history of modern philosophy (11th December 1830), which Sainte-Beuve summarised, adding a lengthy commentary, tackles the question of the destiny of man and humanity, distinguishing between “critical epochs” and “founding epochs” and proclaiming the end of the “reign of religion” and the establishment of a “reign of philosophy” thanks to the emancipation of human reason (cf. Sainte-Beuve, pp. 179–184).

Focusing mainly on psychological themes and the parallel between sensible and internal observation (or “inner sense”), Jouffroy manifested his interest in the history of philosophy on a theoretical plane in an article which appeared in 1827 in *Globe*. Here he convincingly reformulated Cousin’s connection between psychology and the history of philosophy, that is, between the psychological method (which works back from the facts concerning consciousness to the “laws of a moral and intellectual nature”) and the historical method. The historical method presents a large and comprehensive collection of “facts concerning human nature” and therefore “solutions” to the great philosophical questions; each solution contains “a portion of truth” which must be compared with the others in order to reach the “complete, that is, the true solution”. Philosophy, therefore, in its entirety already exists in its history, as Cousin had maintained, but “it exists only for the small number of those who are erudite and also philosophers, and spend their lives looking for its limbs scattered through the monuments containing it”. In order for philosophy “to really be”, it must “be known [by means of editions and translations] and organised”, making the various “questions” correspond to the “truths discovered about each of them by the different philosophers” (Th. Jouffroy, *De l’histoire de la philosophie*, in Id., *Mélanges philosophiques* [1833] (Paris, 1979), pp. 188–190). There is no rivalry between the two methods – the psychological and the historical – and they are destined to “be resolved into a single complete method”: “in order to identify the facts concerning the human mind in systems, the historian must have observed them in real life”, hence, from this point of view, “the historical method implies and presupposes the psychological method”; on the other hand, the latter derives considerable benefit from the historical method, which provides a “rich

treasure of information” useful to complete and check the discoveries made through observation. Thanks to the joint action of the two methods, it is therefore possible to achieve the “first great *desideratum* of philosophy: a complete statistical data concerning the phenomena of a moral and intellectual nature, from which knowledge of the laws governing it should emerge by induction, and the scientific solution to all the important questions related to it by deduction” (pp. 194–195). In short, “without psychology we would not understand history, and without history we would mistrust psychology” (p. 198).

Theoretical reflection – intended to illustrate the role and functions of the history of philosophy, with references to Royer-Collard, Cousin, and Pierre-François Van Meenen – is also the context underlying the *Discours prononcé à l’ouverture du cours de l’histoire de la philosophie au Musée des sciences et des lettres, le 18 avril 1827* (Brussels, M. Hayez, 1827, pp. 41)¹² by Jean-Sylvain Van de Weyer, professor of the history of philosophy and curator of the *Bibliothèque publique* in Brussels. Many text books on the general history of philosophy were produced in the period 1833–1845, when the institutionalisation of eclecticism was accompanied by a general interest in the vicissitudes of human thought. The first was the *Histoire abrégée de la philosophie ancienne et moderne* (Paris, Hachette, 1833, pp. 625; 2nd ed. 1838) by Célestin Hippeau (1803–1883), who also taught at a provincial *collège*, then founded the *École des sciences appliquées* in Paris, and subsequently taught French literature at the universities of Strasbourg and Caen. In assigning the history of philosophy the task of “presenting, on a large scale, the development of the faculties existing in the consciousness of each individual – sensibility, intelligence, and will” (p. 7), Hippeau was referring to the connection between psychology and the history of philosophy which was fundamental in Cousin and Jouffroy, and before them in Degérando.

Exclusively didactic is the *Cours élémentaire de philosophie destiné aux collèges royaux et communaux* by J.-F.-A. Caro. *Deuxième édition, suivie de l’Histoire abrégée de la philosophie* (Paris and Rennes, Hachette and Vatar, 1834), 2 vols, 8° (Italian transl. by Antonio Contrucci, Florence, Ricordi-Jouhaud, 1846), with the history of philosophy taking up pages 145–338 of the second volume. Like Hippeau, Caro (a professor of philosophy at the *collège royal* in Rennes) observes that the history of philosophy “provides the psychologist with a means to complete his discoveries, check and prove their correctness” (II, p. 338). The main source for this text book is Cousin’s *Introduction à l’histoire de la philosophie*, together with the French translation of Tennemann, although in the text Caro also mentions Degérando, the *Histoire abrégée des sciences métaphysiques, morales et politiques, depuis la Renaissance des Lettres* by Dugald Stewart, translated by Jean-Alexandre-C. Buchon (Paris, 1820–1823), the *Histoire abrégée du platonisme* which was added by

¹²This work, entitled *Discours sur l’histoire de la philosophie*, was reprinted in Brussels by A. Wahlen in 1840 together with *De la direction actuellement nécessaire aux études philosophiques* by the Baron F.-A.-F.-T. Reiffenberg [1828] and *De la philosophie en Belgique* by Cousin [1830]. It was then included in the *Choix d’opuscules philosophiques, historiques, politiques et littéraires* edited by Van de Weyer (London, Trübner, 1863).

Joseph-Victor Leclerc to the second edition of Plato's *Pensées sur la religion, la morale, la politique* (Paris, 1824), and the *Essais de philosophie, de politique et de littérature* by Ancillon (on Kant and Schelling).

The *Manuel de l'histoire de la philosophie, à l'usage des candidats au baccalauréat ès-lettres* (Paris, Dezobry, E. Magdeleine et Cie, 1845, 18°, pp. viii–158) by Francisque Bouillier (1813–1899), professor of philosophy at the Faculty of Letters in Lyon, can also be considered as a text book for teaching. “It is difficult to find space for the history of philosophy”, observes Bouillier in the ‘Avertissement’, “in a one-year course which includes the teaching of psychology, logic, morals, and theodicy. Yet, is it tolerable that students finish a course of philosophy without being informed of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, or Leibniz? Just imagine that they end the course in *humanités* without knowing Corneille or Racine! It is not possible, therefore, to totally exclude the history of philosophy from the courses held in the *collèges*, but it is absolutely necessary to restrict and confine it to the most outstanding philosophers and doctrines” (pp. xi–xii). In conformity with the subjects to be dealt with, the treatment of Oriental philosophy (which, as we have seen, was included in text books of Catholic inspiration) is thus omitted. Besides the “general features of each epoch”, the writers examined are Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Thomas Aquinas, Bacon, Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant, who are the object of a “simple account”, while “criticism” is carried out by the teacher (p. xii).¹³

Among these text books, the most outstanding is the *Histoire abrégée de la philosophie* (Paris, Ladrangé, 1840, 8°, pp. xxxviii–511) by Claude-Joseph Tissot (1801–1876), a supporter of a form of spiritualism which had a rationalistic basis. Tissot had already written a *Cours élémentaire de philosophie* (Paris, 1837, 4th ed. 1869) and had translated the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1835) and the first part of Ritter's *Geschichte der Philosophie* (1835–1836) into French. The *Histoire abrégée* was translated into Italian by Nicola Corcia: *Storia compendiata della filosofia di*

¹³ Just like Barbe (see above, pp. 363–364), Bouillier also lists the ten “questions” concerning the history of philosophy which are part of the course of studies for the *baccalauréat*. On the teaching of the history of philosophy in the *collèges* (which was not included in the course of studies of 1823 and was introduced in 1832, when Jouffroy was a member of the commission) cf. EPHU, I, pp. 810–811; Rancan de Azevedo Marques, *V. Cousin, Th. Jouffroy e l'eclettismo*, p. 189 note. Among the text books of philosophy produced by the school of Cousin we can mention the *Programme d'un cours de philosophie à l'usage des collèges. Deuxième édition, augmentée d'un abrégé de l'histoire de la philosophie* (Toulouse, Paya, 1833, pp. xvi–398; 5th ed. 1850) by Adolphe-Félix Gatién-Arnoult, professor of philosophy at the Faculty of Letters in Toulouse, who later published the *Éléments généraux de l'histoire comparée de la philosophie, de la littérature et des événements publics depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nous, avec une appendice sur l'histoire du droit, de la théologie, des sciences et des arts* (Toulouse, Bon et Privat, 1841), 4°, pp. xvii–130. A special section devoted to the history of philosophy is also present in the *Manuel de philosophie à l'usage des collèges. Introduction et psychologie*, par A. Jacques [...]. *Logique et histoire de la philosophie*, par J. Simon [...]. *Morale et théodicée*, par É. Saisset (Paris, Joubert, 1846), 8°, pp. x–648. This very successful text book, revised and updated, reached the ninth edition (1883) and was also translated into Castilian in 1868 (cf. SSGF, V, pp. 467–470). On the eve of 1848, two other pupils of Cousin, Charles-Pendrell Waddington-Kastus and Adolphe Hatzfeld, started to write a new work, which, however, was not completed.

G. Tissot, *Professore di filosofia nella Facoltà di Letteratura di Digione* (Milan, Stabilim. librario Volpato, 1852), 2 vols, pp. VIII-247 and 252 (here we use this translation, which we consulted in a copy that belonged to Roberto Ardigò, now in the University Library of Padua). Tissot's union of Kantianism and eclecticism appears in the introduction on the "method to be followed in the study of the history of philosophy", where some themes typical of Tennemann (such as the distinction between "matter" and "form" in the history of philosophy) are accompanied by observations concerning the chronological, ethnographic, and "logical" method derived from Cousin, who is also the source of the framework of the four philosophical systems, which are essentially reduced to two: sensualism (or empiricism) and idealism (or rationalism), reconcilable in "synthetism", that is to say, the coexistence, "according to natural, not arbitrary proportions", of empirical and rational elements (I, p. 36). On a methodological level, however, there is also a reference to the rules set out by Brucker.

As for periodisation, Tissot is cautious, because "the subdivisions of the history of philosophy are merely approximate and should not be adopted too rigorously" (I, p. 41). In practice he tries to bring together ideas of various origin: on one hand, in the final index the great subdivision into "ancient philosophy" (also including the doctrines of the East) and "philosophy of the modern times" (from Christianity onwards) seems to come from Ritter's well-known framework; on the other, in the 'Prefatory remarks' he distinguishes between three great periods, which then become four, from which Oriental philosophy is finally excluded, because "the Greeks were the first who really philosophised" (I, p. 3; however, about 60 pages are devoted to "Oriental philosophy" in its various expressions). The first period goes from Thales up to the end of the eighth century AD and is characterised by free rational speculation, which, however, is devoid of method. It is subdivided into three epochs: from Thales to Socrates; from Socrates to Philo of Larissa and Antiochus of Ascalon; and from the introduction of philosophy to Rome and from Aenesidemus the Sceptic to John Damascene. The second period corresponds to Scholasticism, during which (and we see the influence of Cousin here) philosophy was reduced to a "means", its scope was restricted, and "it was only allowed to manifest itself as form" (I, p. 4). This period is subdivided into four epochs, which close with Roscelin, Alexander of Hales, Ockham, and Francis Bacon, respectively. The third period involved the decisive liberation of philosophy from the "double bond to Aristotle's logic and positive theology" (I, p. 20), and goes from Bacon and Descartes up to Kant. Tissot underlines the role of the Reformation (which, "by rejecting the principle of authority, made it particularly easy to bring together rationalism and religious tradition") and above all Descartes: "it is to be observed that modern philosophy as a whole, from Locke and Spinoza up until Schelling's philosophy of nature, derives in particular from Descartes", while Bacon's philosophy was "more physical and experimental" (I, pp. 21–22). Finally, the fourth period started with Kant, who fully profited from the Cartesian distinction between subject and object, taking conscience as his starting point "in order to lay down the principles of all sciences and, finally, to found" (the echo of Tennemann is clear here) "a definitive rational philosophy. Kant understood the great importance of this

position, and made it forever impossible to accept any superficial and arbitrary philosophy" (I, p. 23).

Tissot's summary of the history of philosophy is characterised above all by the large amount of space devoted to German philosophy "from Kant up to the present age", which occupies the greatest part of volume II (205 pages!), the subject of which is the "philosophy of the modern age" from the Church Fathers onwards.¹⁴ His position clearly appears from the final "Reflections on German philosophy", where he objects to the principle whereby Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, who came after Kant, surpassed Kant. On the contrary, Tissot declares that "Kant's philosophy is generally superior to that of his successors. [...] It is from him that we have to start our studies of philosophy, since he was the first in order of time and ideas" (II, pp. 208 and 210). Tissot indeed defends him from the accusation of scepticism and "pure idealism": "Kant takes man as his starting point, man in his entirety, considered as a certain and immediate fact, whereas Fichte already mutilates consciousness, and Schelling tries to get rid of it and surrender to nature without it; Hegel takes neither consciousness nor nature as his starting point; the absolute idea is the only starting point he admits" (II, p. 213).

Among Kant's successors, Tissot appreciates Beck, Reinhold, Krug, Fries, and Herbart, who possesses "common sense and sound reason", whereas he condemns the "eccentricities" shown by Novalis, Baader, and Calker, etc. Following Beneke, Tissot is convinced that "Kantianism, in its perfect purity, that is to say, free of its barbarous formal apparatus, will triumph over the metaphysical method; the future is in favour of the spirit of Kant, and perhaps even of his words; his doctrine will be shared by all thinkers of all civilised peoples" (II, p. 219). In France, Kant's thought even found five classes of adversaries, but Tissot is convinced that the German philosopher was not really far from the positions of these opposers. Moreover, there is a similarity between critical philosophy and eclecticism, since the latter "tries to understand all systems, and is engaged in finding their reasons and truth". If anything, the difference lies in the fact that the method used by eclecticism does not only apply to the nature of each individual, but also to the "general nature" of man, as it is observable in history (II, pp. 244–246). The path leading towards the more profound impact of Kantianism on French philosophy and the historiography of philosophy itself had thus been traced out.

In addition to the text books cited here let us mention a work whose structure connects it even more closely to Cousin's historiographical positions: *Introduction à l'étude de l'histoire de la philosophie* (Paris, Ladrangé, 1849–1850, 2 vols, 8°, pp. 330 and 334) by Michel Nicolas, a professor of philosophy at the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Montauban, who in his *De l'Éclectisme* (1840) had vigorously defended Cousin from Leroux's criticisms. Nicolas declares explicitly that his work "rests" in particular on Cousin and Ritter and "in fact" aims to be "a philosophy of the history of philosophy" (I, 'Préface', p. 4; on the use of this expression,

¹⁴ Tissot voluntarily excludes from his treatment the Scottish school and the "new French school", that is, eclecticism, because he assumes that it is known by "all those who among us concern themselves with scrupulously philosophy" (Tissot, *Storia compendiata*, I, p. 24).

which can be traced back to Friedrich Schlegel and other romantic authors, cf. Geldsetzer, pp. 116–117). Indeed, Nicolas' work is divided into three parts: part I, entitled 'Considérations générales sur l'histoire de la philosophie' (I, pp. 5–106), consists of ten chapters with a theoretical treatment whose starting point is the definition of philosophy and the need to reduce the multiplicity of systems to their "fundamental types", and which, following Cousin, closes with the "psychological deduction of historical periodicity". Part II presents an 'Examen critique des systèmes', which are classified as follows: materialism, idealism, dualism, pantheism, scepticism, mysticism, syncretism, and eclecticism. Part III ('Du développement historique de la philosophie') is devoted to the history of philosophy, which is subdivided into two great epochs (the ancient age and the Christian age).

This survey ends with a brief mention of the *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques* by Adolphe Franck (1809–1893), "a true summa of eclectic culture" (Ragghianti, p. 238). Indeed, we just need to go over the list of contributors at the end of each volume to get a general overview of Cousin's disciples and followers, as well as their place in the cultural establishment (the teaching in the *collèges* or universities, the *École normale*, *Institut*, *Collège de France*, and the upper levels of ministerial bureaucracy: Franck, for example, was a member of the *Institut* and an *agrégé* of philosophy at the Sorbonne). The six tomes of the *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques, par une Société de professeurs de philosophie* were printed in Paris by the university publisher Hachette from 1844 to 1852 and, from a chronological point of view too, bring to an end the age of the *philosophie d'État*. The guidelines of this undertaking are illustrated in the 'Préface des Auteurs' (I, pp. 1–xx) dated 15th November, 1843: the method adopted is the "psychological" method of Socrates and Descartes, which is far from empiricism and from "pure speculation"; the inspiration is also expressly spiritualistic ("in psychology we teach the most positive spiritualism, allying the system of Leibniz with that of Plato and Descartes") and anticlerical, that is, opposed to those who "have launched a crusade against philosophy and against reason" and maintain that philosophy must become again a "mere appendix to theology" (I, pp. vii, x, and xiii; this refers to the attack the Catholic Church had launched against Cousin and his followers).

A special section is devoted to the concept of the history of philosophy, which is considered to be "inseparable" from philosophy, with which it constitutes "one and the same science". The fundamental perspective is already known to us: the problems addressed by the philosophers over the course of history and the solutions proposed each time correspond to as many "facts arising in human consciousness, facts which enlighten and complete the facts each of us discovers in himself". The history of philosophy, therefore, is a sort of "double check and a necessary complement of psychology". Using the terms of a lay profession of faith, the other foundations of Cousin's eclecticism can be summarised as follows: "we accept that truth belongs to all times and all places, [...] but it does not always manifest itself in the same form and to the same extent. Finally, we believe in a wise progress compatible with the immutable principles of reason, according to which the present state of

science is closely connected to its past; the order according to which the philosophical systems follow one another and are linked together becomes the very order governing the development of human intelligence over the centuries and in humanity as a whole" (p. ix).

In this *Dictionnaire*, there are two type of entry concerning the history of philosophy: beside the entries on individual philosophers (both of greater and lesser importance), some of which are quite lengthy, there are articles reflecting the "ethnographical" principle, such as those devoted to the philosophy of the Arabs and the Greeks (written by Munk and Franck himself, respectively) or to English, French, German, or Italian, philosophy (this last entry is written by Christian Bartholmess). Descartes, Condillac, and French philosophy are obviously examined by Bouillier, whereas Hauréau wrote the articles on Thomas Aquinas and Scholastic philosophy; Aristotle is entrusted to Jules Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, and Socrates and Plato to Paul Janet. There is an extensive treatment of Kant by Jules-Romain Barni (III, pp. 394–439), while Leibniz, Fichte, and Hegel are described by Joseph Willm, an inspector of the Strasburg Protestant Academy who precisely in those years had published the four volumes of his *Histoire de la philosophie allemande depuis Kant jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, Ladrangé, 1846–1849).

(g) *The establishment of 'epochal' and 'regional' histories*

The most significant contribution of the eclectic school was not so much the general histories of philosophy as the production of monographs and 'epochal' or 'regional' histories, that is to say, histories devoted to a specific age or to a clearly defined geographical or national area, following the pattern, for example, of the *Histoire abrégée des sciences métaphysiques, morales et politiques, depuis la Renaissance des Lettres* by Dugald Stewart. It was within this field that Cousin aimed at transforming his school into a true "community of work, whose purpose was the immense task of reappropriating all philosophical works from Antiquity onwards, to be carried out by reading and translating, and by elaborating a system. Everyone is encouraged to begin a journey on which each step (the *agrégation* for teaching, the doctorate in humanities, university *agrégation* from 1840 onwards, the competitions of the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*) leads us deeper and deeper into the history of philosophy and [...] induces us to identify in it the very seat of philosophy" (EPhU, I, p. 811: see also Ravaisson, pp. 69–71). The results of this collective undertaking were imposing, if we consider the historical delay which characterised French compared to German historiography in this field. It produced a 'long-lasting effect' which extended far into the nineteenth century and of which we will only mention the works published before the middle of the century.

First of all, let us mention the *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle* (Paris, Ponthieu, 1828, pp. xii–xxxii–447) by Jean-Philibert Damiron (1794–1862), who was Cousin's most faithful disciple and in 1838 succeeded

Jouffroy to the chair of the history of modern philosophy at the Sorbonne.¹⁵ This essay on contemporary French thought was published in April 1828 and in November was republished in an enlarged form; it contained a series of articles which had appeared in the anti-government magazine *Le Globe* and was a counterpart to the lessons on the history of philosophy that Cousin held at the Sorbonne in that same period. We find here the classification of French philosophy into three schools, which was to become very popular: the “sensualistic”, the “theological”, and the eclectic (which was also termed of “rational spiritualism”), which “offer a survey *en abrégé* of all the systems into which the human mind is divided”. Indeed, they refer to the three principles underlying all the philosophical positions which had arisen in France from the beginning of the new century: sensation, consciousness, and authority, corresponding to “an explanation of things through the ideas of world, man, and God”, that is to say through physics, psychology, and revelation: *Essai sur l'hist. de la philos. en France au XIX^e siècle*, 4th ed. (Brussels, 1832), ‘Avant-Propos’, p. v. Using an image from the Constitution, the presentation of the three schools is compared to a “*Chambre philosophique*, which will assemble and classify the most outstanding representatives of the metaphysical opinions elaborated during the last thirty years according to their analogies and shades” (p. 22; see also, on p. 21, the correspondence established between the three philosophical schools and the political regimes of contemporary France: sensualism corresponds to the Directorate and the Empire, the theological school to the first period of the Restoration, and, reading between the lines, eclecticism is the philosophy of the future).

Equally significant because of its echoes of Cousin, Fichte, and Hegel, is the connection of philosophy with “common sense” and “prevailing beliefs”: the “masses” themselves, spontaneously and without any guide, “shift towards light” and give rise from within themselves to spiritual chiefs, that is, to philosophers, who give “scientific expression” to the convictions of the people, with whom they form an organic whole. It follows that, “if it is true that the systems [of philosophers] represent the beliefs [of the peoples], then the history of systems will be that of beliefs” and it will make it possible “to shed light on the consciousness of mankind which – if considered from a distance and in its popular expression – is at times so difficult to clarify and to understand; it will be a question of discovering the secret of the people through the secret of philosophers” (pp. 1–4). In this perspective, “thinkers are no longer merely thinkers but the representatives of humanity: by studying them, the history of philosophy studies humanity itself and the principles of its own actions”, thus leading us to “identify the general laws of social facts: for these laws

¹⁵ In this regard, see the collection *Discours prononcés à la Faculté des Lettres (Cours d'histoire de la philosophie moderne)* (Paris, Hachette, 1839), containing the opening lecture held on 7th March 1838 (concerning the usefulness of the history of philosophy for philosophy itself), the inaugural lesson of the course held in the 1838–1839 (concerning the role of biography in the history of philosophy) and the final lecture (‘L’induction se résout-elle dans le raisonnement?’). The catalogue of the *Bibl. Nationale* in Paris includes ten other *discours* held by Damiron at the Faculty of Letters in the years 1840–1847 within the course of lectures on the history of modern philosophy. Among the other works by Damiron, let us point out the vast *Mémoire sur Spinoza et sa doctrine* (Paris, 1843), which was presented at the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*.

are nothing but the laws of human thought, and this thought emerges clearly in no other place than philosophical doctrines" (pp. 6–7).

After almost 20 years, Damiron also wrote an *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie en France au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, Hachette, 1846, 2 vols), which also included Hobbes and Spinoza and the 'Introduction' to which (I, pp. 1–84) included the text of the lecture he had delivered at the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques* for a competition whose subject was "the question of Cartesianism". In the 'Préface' to this second historical *Essai*, the author resolutely addresses the problem of the connections between the history of philosophy and philosophy: by rejecting the "principle" of "history for history's sake, with no other purpose than history itself", Damiron observes that, apart from the "really primitive systems", a constant relationship has always connected philosophy and its history; as for Descartes' indifference to the philosophies of the past, this is precisely his *faiblesse*, namely, he did not know or adequately appreciate the doctrines of our forefathers, whereas Aristotle and Leibniz did (I, pp. I–VII). The true principle is therefore, "the purpose of the history of philosophy is not history itself but philosophy": it acquires its complete value insofar as its end consists in philosophy, although it is acknowledged that this principle can bring about misuses and, in any case, gives history a subordinate position. However, great philosophers like Descartes and Kant showed they possessed "that lively and profound intelligence of others' opinions, to the advantage of their own, that represents the essence of history", because they were more concerned with the spirit than the letter, as historians of philosophy usually are (I, pp. XIII–XV).

Let us move on now to other 'regional' or 'epochal' histories. In the field of ancient philosophy privileged by Cousin, outstanding works were written by Charles-Auguste Mallet (*Histoire de la philosophie ionienne*, Paris, 1842; *Histoire de l'École de Mégare, d'Élis et Érétrie*, Paris, 1845), Désiré Henne (*École de Mégare*, Paris, 1843), Thomas-Henri Martin (*Les études sur le "Timée" de Platon*, Paris, 1841, 2 vols), Émile-Edmond Saisset (*Aenésidème*, Paris, 1840: this is a history of ancient scepticism), and Jules Simon (*Histoire de l'École d'Alexandrie*, Paris, 1844–1845, 2 vols). The latter, which had been the subject of a competition organized by the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*, had also been dealt with by Étienne Vacherot in his *Histoire critique de l'École d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1846–1851, 3 vols), whose radical theories – with respect to Catholic orthodoxy – were powerfully criticised by father Alphonse Gratry, chaplain to the *École Normale*.¹⁶ Vacherot was to adopt autonomous positions with respect to Cousin's systems, and even more critical positions were to appear in Félix Ravaisson, who in his graduation dissertation (1838) had studied Speusippus' *placita* and later published an *Essai sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote* in two volumes (Paris, 1837–1846). We must observe, paradoxically, Cousin lay "at the origin even of the philosophical movement which was to demolish him. Although in new forms, spiritualism and eclecticism continue to reign among his denigrators as well" (Gueroult, p. 742).

¹⁶Worth mentioning is also Vacherot's *Discours prononcé pour l'ouverture du cours d'histoire de la philosophie ancienne*, [...] le 5 décembre 1838 (Paris, without date of publication).

Ancient philosophy was also the starting point of the work of Adolphe Franck, who before embarking on the difficult undertaking of the *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques* had published the *Esquisse d'une histoire de la logique, précédée d'une analyse étendue de l'Organum d'Aristote* (Paris, 1838) and a study entitled *La Kabbale ou la philosophie religieuse des Hébreux* (Paris, 1843). Within this framework, a special place must be given to Jacques Matter (1791–1864), almost of the same age as Cousin. Professor of Church history at the Faculty of Theology in Strasbourg and subsequently of the Philosophy of Religion at the Protestant Seminary, Matter was inspired by a deep interest in mysticism (hence his studies on Fénelon, Swedenborg, and Schelling); in his graduation thesis (1817), he had maintained the doctrinal unity of Pythagoras, Plato, and Plotinus. Long before Simon and Vacherot, Matter had brought out an *Essai historique sur l'école alexandrine* (Paris, 1820, 2 vols; 2nd ed.: *Histoire de l'École d'Alexandrie, comparée aux principales écoles contemporaines*, Paris, 1840–1844), which was followed by the *Histoire critique du gnosticisme et de son influence sur les sectes religieuses et philosophiques des six premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris, 1828, 3 vols; Strasbourg and Paris, 1843–1844).

Matter also wrote a *Histoire des doctrines morales et politiques des trois derniers siècles* (Paris, 1836–1837, 3 vols) as well as the *Histoire de la philosophie dans ses rapports avec la religion depuis l'ère chrétienne* (Paris, Hachette, 1854, pp. xii–432), which was intended to be a “natural complement” to the lessons on the philosophy of religion and, following writers like Jacobi, arose from the need to establish a close relationship between religion and philosophy, on which human civilization is based. Matter therefore criticises those historians of philosophy who focus their attention on questions barely related to philosophical speculation which concern rather the “aberrations” of reason, while they neglect theology, that “great science” always proceeding at the side of philosophy, whose mother or daughter or sister it is; hence, “since philosophy is the science of principles and the science of their supreme principle, the history of philosophy must be the history of ideas, which are the true and faithful expression of principles, of that which is immutable in itself and eternal: that is to say, truth; the rest must be left aside” (pp. 1–2). These underlying principles, however, do not support, as one would expect, a pessimistic and radically negative evaluation of the tendencies proper to contemporary thought: on the contrary, as for the central questions, Matter observes a fundamental agreement between philosophy and theology, and so much the more because scepticism is considered to be an “exception”, while sensualism proves to vanish, and critical philosophy, although highly regarded, does not represent a permanent achievement. Against the “positive” philosophy which was so popular in Paris and the “negative” philosophy so widespread in Berlin, he thus again proposes “true philosophy” in agreement with faith, the everlasting representatives of which are Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, and Leibniz (p. 425).

The philosophy of the Middle Ages is the object of a detailed reconstruction by Barthélemy Hauréau (*De la philosophie scolastique*, Paris, 1850, 2 vols; new ed. in 3 tomes, Paris, 1872–1880), who had originally devoted himself to writing a *Critique des hypothèses métaphysiques de Manès, de Pélage et de l'idéalisme*

transcendental de St Augustin (Le Mans, 1840). But an interest in medieval thought (as in Saisset's *thèse* entitled *De varia S. Anselmi in Proslogio argumenti fortuna* (Paris, 1840), or Charles de Rémusat's *Abélard*, published in Paris in 1845) had already been awoken by Cousin himself and, before him, by Amable Jourdain's pioneering enquiries (*Recherches critiques sur l'âge et l'origine des traductions latines d'Aristote, et sur des commentaires grecs ou arabes employés par les docteurs scolastiques*, Paris, 1819).¹⁷ This interest had already been systematized organically in the three volumes by Xavier Rousselot entitled *Études sur la philosophie dans le moyen âge* (Paris, Joubert, 1840–1842).¹⁸ In the 'Introduction', it is worth noting the tendency against the traditional attitude of "repugnance" for medieval thought: indeed, what Rousselot intends to propose is not a "history of Scholasticism", but a history "of philosophy during an epoch of the life of mankind. We should acknowledge the fact that this epoch corresponds to the Middle Ages and therefore it has enveloped the philosophical element in an often tyrannical and at times absurd apparatus, but I consider it my task [...] to remove this envelope which is foreign to true philosophy" (I, pp. 1–2). It is certain that in every age philosophy is related to the society of that age, but this influence concerns only the "form" and the "character" of philosophy, not its intrinsic "creation", which must be traced back to the previous ages, in the perspective of a coherent and uninterrupted development. Indeed, "the great stream of thought seems at times to disappear, but nevertheless it continues to flow during the various epochs to emerge again later with a deepest character and plentiful new conquests" (I, p. 4). This coherent view of philosophy takes on a marked national connotation: France is "the first cradle of philosophy in the Middle Ages", since Paris was the "centre of the intellectual movement" (I, p. 9).

Not accidentally, a few years later, Victoire-Antoine-Charles de Riquet, Duc de Caraman (1810–1868), published a *Histoire des révolutions de la philosophie en France pendant le moyen âge jusqu'au seizième siècle, précédée d'une Introduction sur la philosophie de l'antiquité et de celle des premiers temps du Christianisme* (Paris, Ladrangé, 1845–1847, 3 vols), whose animating idea is the connection between ideas and historical events: "History must teach us to look at events in depth, and the true source of events lies in ideas, in the general beliefs harboured by the peoples and especially in the most elevated opinions formulated by superior men, whose thoughts affect the masses and guide their deeds. Philosophical history is thus closely connected to political history: the one and the other are therefore

¹⁷The second edition of this work appeared in Paris in 1843, edited by Amable Jourdain's son, Charles-Marie Jourdain, who had previously published a *Dissertation sur l'état de la philosophie naturelle en Occident et principalement en France pendant la première moitié du XII^e siècle* (Paris, 1838), his doctoral thesis *Doctrina Johannis Gersonii de theologia mystica* (Parisii, 1838), and the works of Abelard (1839).

¹⁸Within medieval philosophy, Rousselot distinguishes between four epochs (instead of three, as it was customary): the first goes from Scotus Eriugena to Lanfranc of Pavia; the second from Roscellinus' nominalism to the realism of William of Champeaux and the Victorines; the third from Abelard's conceptualism to Duns Scotus' realism; the fourth from Ockham's nominalism to Gerson's mysticism.

closely linked together and cannot be separated without damaging their logical and necessary unity” (I, p. 6).

Moving on to modern philosophy, besides the *Histoire et critique de la révolution cartésienne* (Paris and Lyon, 1842) by Francisque Bouillier, later rewritten into the classical *Histoire de la philosophie cartésienne* (Lyon, 1854; Paris, 1868, 2 vols; repr. Hildesheim and New York, 1972), we must note the *mémoire* by the anti-eclectic Jean-Baptiste Bordas-Demoulin on *Le Cartésianisme, ou la véritable rénovation des sciences* (Paris, 1843)¹⁹ and the monographs by Christian Bartholmess: *Jordano Bruno*, Paris, 1846–1847, 2 vols; *Huet, évêque d’Avranches, ou le scepticisme théologique*, Paris, 1850 (in addition to the dissertation *De Bernardino Telesio*, Paris, 1849). The *Manuel de philosophie moderne* (Paris, 1842) by Charles Renouvier, soon followed by the *Manuel de philosophie ancienne* (1844), will be examined in the next volume (for the moment see SSGF, V, pp. 476–500): indeed, unlike other contemporaries, who took their first steps by writing works on the history of philosophy and then turned to other fields of study, Renouvier (who was not rooted in Cousin and was later to come to a form of Neokantianism) continued to show a strong interest in the history of philosophy.

The interest in German modern philosophy, already evident in Tissot, was also expressed in the work by Willm mentioned above and, even before that, in the *Histoire de la philosophie allemande depuis Leibnitz jusqu’à Hegel* (Paris, Charpentier, 1836, 2 vols) by the baron Auguste-Théodore-Hilaire Barchou de Penhoën (1801–1855), a former officer in Algeria who resigned from the army after the July revolution. He made the first French translation of Fichte’s *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (*Destination de l’homme*, Paris, 1832) but, because of his criticisms of Cousin (whom he blamed for the incompatibility between the psychology of the Scottish school and the Hegelian theory of history) and his loyalty to the Bourbons, he aroused little interest within official philosophy. This history of modern German philosophy, which culminates with Hegel, is in fact more extensive in scope, because it comprises, albeit as a summary, French and English thought and it is imbued with a lively interest in the philosophy of history, the development of which is directly related to Kant.²⁰ Barchou has two aims: to go beyond a mere analysis of the philosophical works and grasp the “necessary connection” that links the different systems to the reasons why ideas become “concatenated” in a particular way; and to

¹⁹ In 1834 the same author had published in Paris the *Lettres sur l’éclectisme et le doctrinarisme, où l’on montre la fausseté de ces deux systèmes et l’effet funeste de leur application au gouvernement de la monarchie nouvelle* (pp. viii–47).

²⁰ Barchou de Penhoën, *Histoire de la philosophie allemande*, I, p. 298: “Kant avait découvert dans l’essence même de l’intelligence humaine certaines formes générales, certaines règles invariables qui subsumaient toutes nos perceptions [...]; les successeurs de Kant devaient se trouver fort naturellement conduits à tenter quelque chose de semblable sur l’homme collectif, sur l’homme social, à leur tour devaient chercher dans l’essence même de cet être collectif [...] les formes, les lois générales qui présidaient aux manifestations les plus variées de son activité propre. [...] La philosophie de l’histoire, cette science si chère à notre siècle, cette pensée centrale autour de laquelle gravite le mouvement intellectuel de notre époque, sortait donc toute entière de la critique de Kant”.

reach a “philosophical alliance” between France and Germany, which may offer a solution to the problems induced by the crisis of the Restoration (such as the spread of the German national spirit, and the ensuing aspiration to incorporate Alsace and Lorraine, and the demands of the working class). This “new philosophy” must be “a sort of broad eclecticism”, which will assemble “elements” that are different from one another but unified by the “genius of France”. These elements are: the results achieved by eighteenth-century philosophy; the German philosophy of the last 50 years; the new social theories elaborated in France in particular; and “the mathematical sciences disrupted by infinitesimal calculus” (II, pp. 252–265). The admiration for Hegel (“Using the powerful fire of his logic, he merges in a whole idealism critical philosophy, art, naturalism, religion, State, and history [...]. Here lies Hegel’s eternal glory”: I, p. 243) becomes thus intertwined with the role of France as the first nation in Europe.

It may now be useful to go back to a writer mentioned at the beginning of this ‘Introduction’: Ernest Renan (1823–1892), whose early philosophical education, which he received at the Catholic seminary of Issy, had been inspired by the *philosophie de Lyon*, even though it contained some traces of Cousin and Jouffroy’s eclecticism, German idealism and Leroux’s doctrines in particular. Owing to its rigorously monographic structure (which however presupposed a rationalistic and secular general view of the historical development of philosophy resting on the two fundamental moments of Greek Antiquity and modernity), the *thèse on Averroès et l’averroïsme* (Paris, M. Lévy, 1852: 2nd ed. 1861; repr. Paris, 1997) can be taken as a symbol of the accepted preeminence of ‘regional’ histories and monographic works rather than ‘general’ histories of philosophy, which were increasingly used as reserves and stores behind the lines rather than in the forefront of historiographical research.

But this famous work by Renan presents a further and more profound meaning in its final pages, as it expresses the intrinsic ambivalence of work on the texts of the past and the ideas contained in them, as well as a full awareness of the gap between what a thinker intended to say and the different ways in which his thought has been received and interpreted. Indeed, Renan observes that, “strictly speaking, the history of Averroism is nothing other than the history of a broad contradiction. Averroes, himself a rather free interpreter of the Peripatetic doctrine, is in turn interpreted even more freely”, so that some doctrines he had never thought of have been ascribed to him... “But when men are raised to the dignity of a symbol, it is always necessary to distinguish between their personal life and their afterlife, between what they were in fact and what opinion turned them into”. This is the fundamental, insoluble problem: “For the philologist, a text has only one meaning; but for the *esprit humain*, which placed in that text its whole life and its deepest gratifications (*toutes ses complaisances*), for the human mind which constantly feels new needs, the meticulous interpretation of the philologist is not enough. The text it has adopted must remove all its doubts and meet all its desires. Hence a sort of need for contradiction throughout the philosophical and religious development of humanity”. It is a “contradiction” which – in the ages when authority predominates, as in the case of the Middle Ages – takes place thanks to the innumerable expedients offered by the

commentary, which makes it possible to draw unforeseeable conclusions from the official texts of the Scripture or Aristotle. Thus reversing the centuries-old disregard for the commentary, both biblical and Aristotelian, Renan wonders: "What would humanity be by now if, for the last eighteen centuries, it had understood the Bible using only the lexicons of Gesenius or Bretschneider?"²¹ Nothing can be produced out of a text which is too easy to understand. A really fruitful interpretation, one capable on the basis of an authority accepted once and for all of finding an answer to the needs incessantly arising from human nature, is the work of consciousness rather than of philology" (*Averroès et l'averroïsme*, ed. 1861, pp. 432–433). In the 'Préface' to this work, the young Renan had recalled how benevolently Victor Cousin (as well as Joseph-Victor Le Clerc, professor of Latin eloquence at the Sorbonne) had directed him in his research (pp. x–xi). But this customary homage to the man who, despite the changed political regime, nevertheless remained the spiritual leader of French historiography of philosophy, emphasises more clearly the remarkable improvement which the generation following Cousin was to have on the writing of the history of philosophy in the regions of France.

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- (g) Gueroult, pp. 737–747; J. Barrington Bullen, *The Myth of the Renaissance in Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 156–182; A. Savorelli, 'Rinascimento e modernità nel *Discours sur l'histoire de la Philosophie à l'époque de la Renaissance* di Giuseppe Ferrari', in *Rinascimento: mito e concetto*, ed. by R. Ragghianti and A. Savorelli (Pisa 2005), pp. 179–211; Daled, *Le matérialisme occulté*, pp. 207–224 (on Damiron); F. Barancy, 'Politiques de l'éclectisme en situation de crise. Damiron promoteur d'une école philosophique', in Antoine-Mahut and D. Whistler (eds), *Une arme philosophique: l'éclectisme de Victor Cousin*, pp. 81–92; J. Chaix-Ruy, *Ernest Renan* (Paris, 1956), pp. 152–179; J.-P. Charnay, 'Le dernier surgeon de l'averroïsme en Occident: Averroès et l'Averroïsme de Renan', in *Multiple Averroès. Actes du Colloque international organisé à l'occasion du 850^e anniversaire de la naissance d'Averroès*, ed. by J. Jolivet (Paris, 1978), pp. 333–348; *Ernest Renan. La science, la religion, la République*, ed. by H. Laurens (Paris, 2013); J. Marenbon, 'Ernest Renan and Averroism: The Story of a Misinterpretation', in *Renaissance*

Averroism and Its Aftermath: Arabic Philosophy in Early Modern Europe, ed. by A. Akasoy and G. Giglioni (Dordrecht, 2013), pp. 273–283; C. König-Pralong, *Médiévisme philosophique et raison moderne: de Pierre Bayle à Ernest Renan* (Paris, 2016); Couzinet and Meliaddò (eds), *L'institution filo-sofoc française et la Renaissance: l'époque de Victor Cousin*.

5.1 Victor Cousin (1792–1867)

Cours de philosophie (or Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie)

5.1.1 Born in Paris on 23rd November, 1792 into a humble family, Victor Cousin was able to study at the *Lycée Charlemagne*, and then at the newly established *École Normale* (1810), where he attended the courses by Laromiguière, Royer-Collard, and Villemain. He compensated for the modesty of his philosophical education with his outstanding ability to assimilate doctrinal ideas from various sources. After discussing his thesis (which was inspired by Condillac's philosophy), towards the end of 1815 he was appointed temporary substitute for Royer-Collard at the Faculty of Letters, where he held a course on Scottish philosophy, to which Royer-Collard (who himself had studied law) had turned in order to oppose the sensualism of the *Idéologues*. In 1816 he began to frequent the *société* of Maine de Biran and the following year he travelled to Germany where he met Hegel. The effects of this experience beyond the Rhine were immediately evident; indeed, the course he held in 1818 dealt with “the foundation of absolute ideas: the True, the Beautiful, and the Good” and in this text “there is for the first time a claim for the legacy of eclecticism, in line with the Alexandrians and Leibniz” (Vermeren, p. 354).

After another trip to Germany, during which he came into contact with Schelling and Jacobi, Cousin devoted the course he held in 1819–1820 to the moral philosophy of the eighteenth century, more particularly to the “sensualistic” school, the Scottish school, and Kant. The great success of these lessons (it seems that no less than 800 people came to listen to him at the *collège du Plessis*, which still housed the Faculty of Letters) should be ascribed not so much to the solidity of his teaching as to his qualities as an orator and actor, addressing himself to an audience inclined to curiosity but not particularly educated and rather responsive to the clear positions he took in support of the Constitution.²² The murder of the duke of Berry and the ensuing police reaction put an end to the course of lectures held by Cousin, who in 1822, after the closure of the *École Normale*, was also deprived of the position of

²²An eloquent picture of the way in which Cousin (defined as “le plus admirable tragédien du temps”) prepared and delivered his lessons is provided by Taine: “On the appointed day, the applause, the popularity, the notices in the papers, the large attendance, the interest shown by the Party, the sentiment of glory, all this carried him away into genius. His black eyes flashed. His features, his arms, his body, all of him was speaking. His pondered speech took the tone of sublime improvisation; philosophy brightened him [...]” (Taine, pp. 203–204).

maître de conférences he occupied there. To earn his living he was forced to work as a private teacher in the house of the duke of Montebello (while he devoted his leisure time to editing Proclus and Descartes and translating Plato); in 1824 he accompanied the duke to Dresden where he was arrested following a notification submitted by the French police to the plenipotentiary minister of Prussia in Paris. Extradited from Saxony to Prussia under indictment for being in contact with secret societies, he was kept in prison for a few months and then in obligatory residence in Berlin, until 1825, thanks to the intercession of Hegel and to the campaign proclaimed in his favour by the liberal opposition in Paris, he was allowed to go back to France.

A radical change took place in 1828 with the Martignac ministry, which reinstated Cousin in his position as a teacher (no longer as a substitute, but as Royer-Collard's *adjoint*), along with Guizot and Villemain. These three professors, who were outstanding exponents of liberalism, aroused extraordinary enthusiasm. Cousin's lessons on the general history of philosophy (1828) and on eighteenth-century thought (1829), which he often animated by explicitly taking sides in favour of the Constitution, were taken down in shorthand, published as booklets, commented on by literary journals and circulated throughout Europe. With the accession to the throne of Louis-Philippe, after the July revolution, the greatly applauded professor became the official philosopher of the Orleanist monarchy, which seemed to embody his political ideal of an intermediate regime between the opposed extremes of monarchical absolutism and republican demagoguery. Eclecticism was thus assigned a primary role, although from 1828 it was the object of vigorous criticism, while in universities and local high schools (as in Strasbourg and Lyon) there continued to exist significant pockets of resistance holding on to traditional teaching. After he was promoted to the post of regular professor, Cousin was relieved of the task of teaching, which enabled him to devote himself entirely to organising the philosophical institution and educational policy, accumulating several functions: member of the royal Council of education, State councillor, president of the Committee in charge of the *agrégation* in philosophy, director of the *École Normale* (1832), member of the *Académie française* and of the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*, peer of France (1833); for 8 months he acted as minister for education and cults in the Thiers cabinet (1840), which soon fell into the dangerous isolation which surrounded France during the Egyptian affair.

The guiding principle followed by Cousin in these years, both in his political and administrative activity and in his writings, was part of a clear "strategy aiming at creating an alliance between the modern liberal State and philosophy" (Vermeren, p. 357). This strategy, which he had already outlined in the past and was perfectly consistent with his eclectic orientation, was modelled on a sort of lay religion: it was a "spiritualism" which did not go as far as the Christian religion (while it proposed itself as a liberal heir of the conquests of the 1789 revolution, considered as a universally valid model), its primary agent were state schools and their teachers, of whom the professors of philosophy were the cutting edge. Consequently, there were frequent, inevitable conflicts with those like the Catholics who were antagonistic and competitive in the field of education, or those like the Socialists and the radical

Republicans who considered this strategy too moderate and functional to the middle class. During the Orleanist monarchy, Cousin maintained his position vigorously, and in his speeches to the House of Peers he defended the validity of teaching philosophy (and therefore the history of philosophy) against the accusations of exercising a monopoly by opposite fronts and against the indifference shown by the Liberal party itself. In his speech of 3rd May 1844, for example, he referred to Guizot reiterating that “the State is not atheistic but lay; similarly, the philosophy taught at University is not impious but lay; it is and must be increasingly moral and religious but does not favour any of the cults which split France” (*Défense de l’Université et de la philosophie* (Paris, 1844), p. 151).

A new turning point in Cousin’s biography took place with the revolution of February 1848 and the downfall of the monarchy of Louis-Philippe, which brought an end to his institutional charges. Faithful to the moderate interpretation of the connection between philosophy and politics, with his *Justice et charité* he took part in the initiative in which the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques* (motivated by the general Cavaignac) took sides against socialism by circulating a series of booklets intended for the lower classes. But within the ideological and political frame of reference an outstanding role had already been performed by the Catholics, who thanks to the new law on education (1850) granted the clergy a prominent position in the *Conseil supérieur de l’instruction publique* and officially established free schools, where the teaching of philosophy was carried out by its own teachers and text books, in total opposition to Cousin’s strategy. Removed from the levers of control, assailed from the left by the attacks of Giuseppe Ferrari in his pamphlet *Les philosophes salariés* (1849), Cousin held onto the idea of a constitutional monarchy and looked with distrust both at the Socialist-oriented republic and the subsequent reactionary tendencies which culminated with the coup d’état of the 2nd December 1851.

As for the new Bonapartist regime, it aimed at purging those teachers of philosophy who seemed most restless – and who belonged for the most part to the eclectic school. Together with Villemain, Cousin ended up by asking for early retirement (May 1852), thus following Guizot’s example, but he was allowed to continue to occupy his apartment at the Sorbonne. When someone complained that this *retraite* was a sort of “public disaster for the young people attending the Schools”, who were deprived of these “eloquent voices”, the caustic Sainte-Beuve observed that “twenty-two years before these illustrious masters had stopped teaching, and held their personal chairs only through their lieutenants” (Sainte-Beuve, p. 147). In the following years, Cousin devoted himself to biographical research on famous male and female figures of the seventeenth century, thereby enjoying considerable popularity, and he edited an updated re-edition of his philosophical works. Since he was an exponent of the Orleanist party whose stronghold was the *Académie française* and which opposed Napoléon III, the latter made him the honour of naming a street near the Sorbonne (the former rue de l’hôtel de Cluny) after him, while he was still alive, as a reward for his promise to bequeath his extremely rich library to the Sorbonne. He died of apoplexy in Cannes, where he used to spend the winter, on 13th January 1867. An imposing official funeral was given to him in Paris.

5.1.2 Cousin's literary production, which was devoted for the most part to the historiography of philosophy, is not characterised by a large quantity of works but rather by the frequent new editions of his major works, which were constantly revised and reworked for reasons of cultural policy in particular. A complete chronological list of his printed works in their various editions, excluding the separate articles which appeared in magazines and were later collected in volumes, is provided by Vermeren, pp. 362–366. We will limit ourselves here to mentioning his most significant works in the field of the history of philosophy, grouping them by periods or areas of research.

After his graduation thesis of about 20 pages (*Dissertatio philosophica de methodo sive de analysi, quam ad publicam disceptationem proponit ad doctoris gradum promovendus Victor Cousin, [...] die julii decima nona 1813*, Paris, Fain, [without date of publication]), a first group includes the lessons held during the years 1815–1820, which were published later (except for the initial *Discours prononcé à l'ouverture du Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie, le 13 décembre 1815*, Paris, Delaunay, 1816): *Cours d'histoire de la philosophie moderne pendant les années 1816 et 1817* (Paris, Ladrangé, 1841); *Cours de philosophie de 1818 sur les fondements des idées absolues du Vrai, du Beau et du Bien*, ed. by A. Garnier (Paris, Hachette, 1836)²³; *Cours d'histoire de la philosophie morale au dix-huitième siècle professé en 1819–1820* (Paris, Ladrangé, 1839–1842, 3 vols). From 1816 to 1819 he also published a series of articles in the *Journal des savants* and the *Archives philosophiques*, which were later collected (with a lengthy and important 'Préface' concerning eclecticism) in the *Fragmens (sic in the first edition) philosophiques* (Paris, Sautelet, 1826; 2nd ed. 1833, with a new 'Préface' where Cousin responds to the objections formulated by Schelling against the "psychological" method and the transition from psychology to ontology; 3rd ed. 1838, with an 'Avertissement' indicating an evolution from German idealism to a spiritualism inspired by Descartes). Some of the articles collected in the *Fragmens philosophiques* concern the general history of philosophy: *De l'histoire de la philosophie* (1816), *Essai d'une classification des questions et des écoles philosophiques* (1817), *L'Orient et la Grèce, ou histoire de la méthode philosophique chez les Grecs* (1810), Cousin's reviews of the French translation of Buhle's history of modern philosophy (1817) and the second edition of Degérando's *Histoire comparée* (1825). The partial transcription of the lecture on the history of philosophy from Thales to Aristotle he held at the *École Normale* in 1835 has been published in *La storia della filosofia come problema: seminario 1985–1987*, ed. by P. Cristofolini (Pisa, 1988), pp. 103–110.

A second group of publications is related to Cousin's work as a philologist and editor during the years in which he was removed from public teaching: the

²³ Largely reworked for the 3rd ed. (1853) in order to respond to the accusations of pantheism made against him by the Catholics, this work was considered by Cousin himself to be a synthesis of his philosophical position, thus becoming the most typical example of a spiritualism which was fashionable during the nineteenth century but fell into great disrepute at the end of the century (on its doctrinal content, see EPhU, III/1, pp., 1692–1693).

translation and edition of Proclus' works in six volumes (1820–1823; 2nd ed. 1864; repr. Frankfurt, 1962), the edition in 11 volumes of Descartes' writings and letters (1824–1826) and the translation in 13 volumes of Plato's works (1822–1840; 2nd ed. 1896, by Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire; on this translation, which is modelled on the German one made by Schleiermacher, cf. Vermeren, p. 99; see also V. Cousin, *Plato*, ed. by Chr. Mauve, M. Narcy, R. Ragghianti, and P. Vermeren (Paris, 2017), where Cousin's introductions to the volumes of Plato's *Oeuvres* are republished). We may include in this group the edition of Laromiguière's *Leçons de philosophie* (1829) and Maine de Biran's works (1834 and 1841), the translation of books I and XII of the *Metaphysics* which is appended to *De la Métaphysique d'Aristote. Rapport sur le concours ouvert par l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques* (1835), and the edition of Abelard's unpublished writings (1836), which represented a milestone in studies on this medieval thinker.

The work of greatest interest here is the *Cours de philosophie*, which holds the lessons held in 1828–1829, when Cousin was reinstated in university teaching. The *Cours* is divided into two volumes: the first comprises the lessons of the year 1828, which were published in the same year in Paris by Pichon et Didier under the title *Introduction à l'histoire de la philosophie*; they were reprinted several times (8th ed. 1877) and were republished, edited by P. Vermeren, in the “Corpus des oeuvres de philosophie en langue française”: *Cours de philosophie. Introduction à l'histoire de la philosophie* (Paris, Fayard, 1991), pp. 366 (we will use this edition, hereafter abbreviated to *Cours I*). The reprint of the Paris edition of 1836 of this course is also available: V. Cousin, *Oeuvres de jeunesse*, I. *Cours de philosophie professé à la Faculté des Lettres pendant l'année 1828*, ed. by O. Haac and J.-P. Cotten (Geneva, 2000). The second volume was published in 1829 and contains the lessons held in that year, subdivided into two tomes (tome I. *Histoire de la philosophie du XVIII^e siècle*; tome II. *Histoire de la philosophie du XVIII^e siècle. École sensualiste. Locke*); this second volume will be quoted here as *Cours II*, with reference to the Brussels edition of the *Oeuvres* of 1840–1841, vol. I, pp. III–349. In 1841, the whole *Cours de philosophie*, containing the lessons held during the 2 years 1828–1829, saw a new “revised and amended” edition published by Didier under the title *Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie*. There followed several phases of reworking of the first 12 lessons of the *Cours* of 1829, the fourth edition of which appeared under the new title *Histoire générale de la philosophie, depuis les temps plus anciens jusqu'au XIX^e siècle* (Paris, Didier, 1861, 18°, pp. 539), up to the twelfth edition by Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire (Paris, E. Perrin, 1884, 16°, pp. IV–615). On the meticulous revisions to which Cousin subjected his works on the history of philosophy, cf. Ragghianti, pp. 72–73; Ragghianti himself edited the text of a lesson held by Cousin on the outline of the history of philosophy contained in the first book of the *Metaphysics*: V. Cousin, ‘Fragment aristotélicien’, *Historia philosophica*, I (2004), pp. 93–109.

The fruitful 2 years 1828–1829 also produced the *Nouveaux fragments philosophiques* (1828), devoted to ancient philosophy; considerably augmented, in 1865–1866 these finally led to the *Fragments philosophiques pour servir à l'histoire de la philosophie* (repr. Geneva, 1970), subdivided into five volumes: ancient, mediæval, modern (2 vols), and contemporary philosophy. These are rather

heterogeneous collections, ranging from university courses to short essays (such as *Vanini ou la philosophie avant Descartes*) and the edition of unpublished texts such as the correspondence between Malebranche and Leibniz. They show detailed research into the history of philosophy, which makes use of erudition and is complementary to the vast syntheses. An eloquent example of the latter is represented by the 'Préface' to the French translation of Tennemann's *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (*Manuel de l'Histoire de la philosophie*, Paris, Sautelet, 1829; Louvain, F. Michel, 1830; a second edition of the *Manuel*, "amended and augmented on the basis of the fifth and last German edition", was printed in 1839).

Among the other philosophical works, let us mention the volume *Des Pensées de Pascal. Rapport à l'Académie française sur la nécessité d'une nouvelle édition de cet ouvrage* (Paris, Ladrangé, 1843; 5th ed. 1857), which propagated the image of a sceptic Pascal, believing in God out of despair. Two (incomplete) editions of Cousin's *Oeuvres* came out in Brussels during the years 1840–1841 (Société Belge de Librairie, 3 vols, 4°) and in Paris between 1846 and 1851 (Ladrangé, 16 vols, 12°). An edition of Cousin's *opera omnia* is still lacking today. In the English-speaking countries, Cousin became known thanks to several English translations: *Introduction to the History of Philosophy* (Boston, 1832); *Elements of psychology, included in a critical examination of Locke's Essay on the human understanding* [containing the lessons 16–25 of the *Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie*] (Hartford, 1834; New York, 1838 and 1842; London, 1851); *Exposition of Eclecticism* [containing the prefaces to the first two editions of the *Fragments philosophiques*] (Edinburgh, 1839); *The Philosophy of the Beautiful* (London, 1848; New York, 1849); *Lectures on the True, the Beautiful, and the Good* (3rd ed. Edinburgh, 1854); and *Course of the History of Modern Philosophy* (Edinburgh, 1852; New York, 1857). In Italian Galluppi edited a version of the *Fragments philosophiques* (*La filosofia di V. Cousin*, Naples, 1831–1832; see below, p. 490). A translation of the prefaces to the first and second editions of the *Fragments philosophiques* was printed in Lugano (1834). Moreover, let us mention: V. Cousin, *Il metodo eclettico*, transl. by F. Fiorentino (Lecce, 1993). Finally, it is to be noted that the Cousin collection in the Library of the Sorbonne (including 5628 letters divided into 40 volumes and for the most part addressed to Cousin by 1449 correspondents) represented a valuable source for the spread of philosophical and literary studies in France and Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century.

5.1.3 A first systematic elucidation of Cousin's speculative attitude and its fundamental sensitivity to the historical perspective is contained in the 'Préface' (dated 1st April, 1826) to the first edition of the *Fragments philosophiques*, where Cousin reconstructs the philosophical itinerary of his youth. The articles contained in the *Fragments* (which, as we have said, refer to the years 1816–1819) are related to his contemporary teaching activity at the *École Normale* and the *Faculté des Lettres*, the aim of which was "to pursue the philosophical reform which had been so admirably begun by Royer-Collard" (*Oeuvres*, Brussels, 1841, II, p. 27a). This outline of an intellectual autobiography combines traces of the Cartesian tradition (priority given to the *method*, since "a system is nothing other than the development of a method applied to certain objects" and "the manifest or hidden principle of any

philosophical reform lies in a change or an advance of the method”) and German idealism (“Speculative or practical philosophy is the alliance of necessity and freedom in the mind of man who spontaneously places himself in accordance with the laws of universal existence. The final aim is in the infinite, but the starting point is in ourselves”: p. 27ab). But to *which* method should we refer? The answer to this question seems to be a typical application of the “inclusive” process theorised by Cousin, which is so inclusive that it appears to be all-embracing and therefore generic: we should follow the method that belongs “to the spirit of the times (studied scrupulously and voluntarily accepted), to national customs, and to my own habits”. The tone adopted seems so determined and certain that it leaves in the background the highly problematic nature of referring to the cognitive faculties of the individual and, at the same time, to the tendencies proper to a nation and to the more elevated *esprit du temps* (the Hegelian *Zeitgeist*), which must be acknowledged and accepted as a historical and rational necessity (later Cousin was to affirm that “the spirit of the times itself is the work of the general spirit of the world”: p. 29a).

After this principled statement, Cousin proceeds by wisely applying the historicist criterion to the much condemned “sensualism” of the eighteenth century: looking at the great success enjoyed by Locke and Condillac during the eighteenth century, we should not be “annoyed” but should “try to understand it, because, after all, *facts* do not emerge by themselves, [but] they do have their *laws* which relate to the general laws of the human species” (p. 28a; italics ours). We perceive here echoes of the *science de l’homme* whose root was *idéologique* as adapted by Degérando to the “facts” of the history of philosophy; but the novelty consists precisely in putting forward this structure again (which is certainly not new) within a clearly historicist perspective: “Within the general movement of things and in the progression of times, the spirit of analysis and observation must necessarily find its own place, and it found it in the eighteenth century”. For Cartesianism had neglected recourse to observation and had become lost “in ontological hypotheses and in Scholastic formulas”, and this is what explains the great success enjoyed by Locke and Condillac’s “sad philosophy”; this success “was not brought about by the doctrines of this philosophy but by its method, which did not belong to it but to its whole age”, so much so that both Reid and Kant in their opposition to sensualism always made use of the experimental method. Cousin therefore emphasises the lasting validity of *observation*, which brings us back to our very nature, that is to say, our cognitive faculties and their “laws”. The centrality of the knowing subject is here reiterated (“whichever method we adopt, we have created it and we use it; it is always through ourselves that we act”: p. 28b).

The mistake does not therefore lie in the experimental method, but in its application, which in Bacon – and even more in Condillac – is limited to the sensible phenomenon and thus neglects that inner experience which had been appreciated by the Scottish school and on which Cousin had founded his early teaching activity in 1815. “Well”, he insists fervently, “facts, whatever they may be, exist for us only as they reach our consciousness. It only there that observation seizes them and describes them before delivering them to induction, which draws from them the

conclusions they harbour within themselves. [...] To go into consciousness again and study all its phenomena scrupulously, their differences as well as their relations: this is the first study a philosopher must conduct; its scientific name is *psychology*. Psychology is therefore the condition and, in a sense, the vestibule of philosophy" (p. 30a; italics in the text).

Cousin then stops to illustrate the acquisitions made on an ontological plane during the 3 years from 1816 to 1818 thanks to the increasingly rigorous application of the psychological method, that is to say, the analysis of the "facts concerning consciousness" which comprise, in addition to sensations, "voluntary facts" and "rational facts" (such as the notions of good and beautiful and the laws of causality and substance, to which "all the laws of thought" are reduced and thanks to which we can ascend to an "absolute cause and an absolute substance", in contrast to Kant's ontological scepticism: pp. 32a–33b). As for the act of will, it is considered as an effect of *réflexion*, which is distinct from the spontaneous activity of the human mind (*spontanéité*) which, by contrast, is related to "freedom", taken in its broadest sense (not only as "free will"); the dimension of freedom is thus also fully attributed to the "enthusiasm felt by the poet and the artist at the moment of creation", as well as the "ignorance that reflects little and acts spontaneously, which corresponds to three quarters of the human species" (p. 35b).

This theme is taken up again on page 39, where in a romantic tone Cousin declares that "humanity as a whole is spontaneous, not reflective": it has a "poetical soul" inspired by the "divine breath existing in it", which guides it towards truth and which is expressed with "prophetic singing"; in contrast, reflection and science are typical of few men who cultivate philosophy which, however, "like all true aristocracy, is not separate from the people, but is in sympathy with it and identifies with it, works for it and is supported by it" (p. 39a; on the relationship between *spontanéité* and *réflexion*, which is pivotal in Cousin's psychology, see the article *Du premier et du dernier fait de conscience, ou de la spontanéité et de la réflexion*, which is quoted in the same volume II of the *Oeuvres*, pp. 118–122; see also *Cours I*, 6 pp. 147 ff.). Cousin seems here to echo the Fichtean theme of the mission of the man of learning; he had previously approached the doctrine of the self in Fichte in a critical manner, emphasising the "triple nature of consciousness" (reason, spontaneous or "personal" activity, sensible impressions), corresponding, on an ontological level, to the "three outer elements" (God, man, nature), in the perspective of a universal harmony where the "divorce between ontology and psychology, speculation and observation, science and common sense" ceases to exist (p. 38a).

Cousin then observes that, after outlining his system (which is "nothing other than an impartial eclecticism applied to the facts concerning consciousness"), from 1819 onwards he shifted his interest from speculation to the history of philosophy, or rather, he attempted to test and investigate his theoretical positions on a historical plane: "Remaining faithful to the psychological method, I transferred it into history; comparing the systems with the facts concerning consciousness and expecting from each system a complete representation of consciousness without obtaining it, I soon achieved the result which was to be greatly developed by my further studies, namely, that each system expresses a class of phenomena and ideas which is indeed significantly real but is not the only one existing in consciousness, and which, however,

plays an almost exclusive role within the system: it follows that each system is not false in itself but incomplete; therefore by assembling all incomplete systems we would obtain a complete philosophy appropriate to consciousness in its entirety. There is undoubtedly a considerable gap between this and a true historical, universal and precise system; but this is the first step, the path has been opened up". Cousin thus proclaims very clearly his intention to "continue the reform of philosophical studies in France, illuminating the history of philosophy with the system and demonstrating this system with the history of philosophy in its entirety" (p. 40ab).

The idea of an "impartial eclecticism applied to the facts concerning consciousness" had already been put forward and applied – as we have seen – by Degérando, whom Cousin takes care not to mention in these pages. Indeed, the fact that eclecticism had long been circulating in France can be deduced, for example, from an observation formulated by Jean-Jacques Combes-Dounous: "Eclecticism has become the philosophy and religion of all thinkers" (*Essai historique sur Platon, et coup d'oeil rapide sur l'histoire du Platonisme depuis Platon jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, Gautier et Bretin, 1809), II, p. 154; on this point, see Raggianti, pp. 150–151; Schneider, p. 200). We should however acknowledge that Cousin had the merit of providing eclecticism with a foundation, overcoming the "method of merely botanical classification" as practised by Degérando, and aiming at deriving some "essential types" from historical observation: he thereby carried out in his own way Kant's project of "outlining an *a priori* scheme of the history of philosophy" (Gueroult, p. 731). Moreover, what distinguishes Cousin's eclecticism is, once again, an intentionally historicist approach, in which "eclecticism is not the philosophy of every history of philosophy but is such in 1828, only because eclecticism is the *necessary* speculative awakening of Europe (France and Germany) in that particular moment of history" (E. Garin, *La filosofia come sapere storico*, 2nd ed. (Rome and Bari, 1990), p. 45, italics in the text).

This approach is summarised with emblematic as well as authoritative clarity in the 'Préface' to the French translation of Tennemann's *Grundriss* (1829). Indeed, the text opens with the classification of the three possible philosophical trends which – according to Cousin – characterised the nineteenth century: the traditionalism of Joseph de Maistre and Bonald, the revival of the speculative systems of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (rationalism or empiricism), and eclecticism.²⁴ The latter obviously met with Cousin's unconditioned approval, but it is interesting that Cousin also dealt with the two other trends, thus offering – in the case of traditionalism in particular – intelligent suggestions for a historical and philosophical analysis, in which what is most conspicuous is the concept of *sécularisation*, the

²⁴ *Manuel de l'histoire de la philosophie, traduit de l'allemand de Tennemann, par V. Cousin* (Louvain, F. Michel, 1830), I, 'Préface', p. 1: "La philosophie n'a aujourd'hui que l'une de ces trois choses à faire: Ou abdiquer, renoncer à l'indépendance, rentrer sous l'ancienne autorité, revenir au moyen âge, Ou continuer à s'agiter dans le cercle de systèmes usés qui se détruisent réciproquement, Ou enfin dégager ce qu'il y a de vrai dans chacun de ces systèmes, et en composer une philosophie supérieure à tous les systèmes, qui les gouverne tous en les dominant tous, qui ne soit plus telle ou telle philosophie, mais la philosophie elle-même dans son essence et dans son unité".

source of which is clearly Hegel. With a resolute tone, Cousin considers it impossible to return to pre-modern thought for reasons pertaining to the historical dynamics of the relations between society, culture, and philosophy. Indeed, “philosophy is only an effect, not a cause. The independence and, so to speak, the secularization of thought are the result of the general progress of the spirit of independence and of the secularization of all things: state, science, art, industry. Thus presented, the question is easily solved. What wind could today uproot this tree which has grown in the midst of storms and has become wet with the blood and tears of so many generations? Modern civilisation cannot step back, and consequently the philosophy representing it cannot step back either. Here lies the vanity of the theocratic school” (*Manuel*, I, ‘Préface’, pp. 1–2).

Cousin acknowledges that “theocracy is the legitimate cradle of dawning societies”, although they depart from it in the course of their development, which is seen as “necessary progress deriving from the nature of things”. Audaciously combining the theory – rooted in the Enlightenment – of progressive perfection with the providentialism of the Christian tradition, the French thinker observes that “every fight against the nature of things is aimed against providence itself; the task of halting civilisation and extinguishing philosophy is therefore a challenge against God himself, a challenge which the spirit of the whole world would not be able to win” (p. 2). This historical and theological argument is followed by an argument of a logical nature: the whole anti-philosophical polemic of the traditionalists is vitiated by a “pusillanimous paralogism”, because they have recourse to rational rigour in order to criticise reason itself. Although he was aware of the torment of many French intellectuals of his time, who passed from revolutionary and palingenetic illusions to extremist traditionalism, Cousin vehemently claimed the validity of free rational investigation against the “appeal to blind faith” (pp. 2–3).

The rejection of theocracy was accompanied by a rejection of philosophy as the antagonism between opposing systems which had characterised the two previous centuries and which brought discredit on philosophy itself, to the full advantage of traditionalism. For Cousin, the cultural climate of the nineteenth century was marked by the aspiration to “extension” and completeness, in relation to which the systems inherited from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries revealed themselves to be incorrigibly limited and unilateral. The fact that these systems could coexist meant that none of them was “absolutely false” but no system could escape criticism and could therefore be considered “absolutely true”. There is no important philosophical principle which, once it is analysed from the perspective of the “long chain of consequences it produced afterwards”, does not finally lose credibility. The famous and seductive principle of sensation, laid down by Locke and Condillac, thus led to Mandeville and Collins, d’Holbach and La Mettrie, and to “all the *saturalia* of materialism and atheism”. As to “noble spiritualism”, it has given rise to “sublime and chimerical abstractions”, while the practice of doubt turned into scepticism, and the appreciation of sentiment led to mysticism (p. 49). Sensualism, spiritualism (or idealism), scepticism, mysticism: this is the quaternary scheme which Cousin had elaborated in those years, drawing inspiration from Tennemann and

Dégérando, and which he considered to be in accordance with the very nature of the *esprit humain*.²⁵

At this point, the only philosophical alternative is an attitude of “equity, moderation, impartiality, and wisdom”, in order to avoid the opposite disadvantages implied by the “fanaticism towards this or that particular system” and the “yoke of theocracy”. Cousin is certainly aware that eclecticism constitutes an extreme solution (*une ressource un peu désespérée*), but it is a choice imposed on the nineteenth century by the course of history itself. Since during the preceding centuries philosophy experienced and exhausted “all fanatical roles [...], all the roles marked by injustice and stupidity at the same time”, the present century “is somehow condemned to play a new role, apparently the humblest but in fact the best and the greatest, that of being fair to all systems without falling victim to any of them; that of studying them all and, instead of following only one of them, whichever it may be, recruiting them all under its flag, thus leading their march in search of freedom and towards its attainment. This ambition not to totally reject and not to totally accept any system [...] is, in a word, eclecticism”.²⁶

²⁵ For a detailed explanation of the theory of the ‘four systems’, see, for example, *Cours II*, 4, pp. 144–151. Facing the opposing dogmatisms and the “eccentric” outcomes of *sensualism* (which rests exclusively on the senses) and *idealism* (which is based only on the “ideas inherent in thought itself”), *réflexion* uses the weapons of criticism, referring back to itself and confuting both systems, and, still ending up by falling into *scepticism*. The latter, however, which marks “the first appearance of common sense on the scene of philosophy”, reveals itself to be intrinsically contradictory when it asserts that there exists no truth, thus becoming, in turn, an even more “exclusive and eccentric” system. At this point, either we renounce *réflexion* – and therefore also philosophy – and we “re-enter the circle of theology”, or *réflexion* recovers that dimension of *spontanéité* that precedes its own appearance and from which both religion and philosophy arise. “Hence, by establishing contact with spontaneity, reflection places itself at the very source and on the boundary of religion and philosophy; thereby it effects a sort of compromise between religion and philosophy”: hence we come to *mysticism*, which avails itself of “inspiration, which comes before all reflective operations” (*ibid.*, pp. 146b–149b). Since they are the “fundamental elements of every philosophy, and of the history of philosophy as well”, these four systems constitute the key to the interpretation of human thought as a whole: “L’histoire de la philosophie ne crée pas les systèmes philosophiques; elle les constate et les explique [...] en les rapportant à leur principe, savoir: l’esprit humain [...]” (p. 150ab).

²⁶ *Manuel*, I, ‘Préface’, p. 5. It is to be noted that, in the subsequent evolution towards spiritualism, the original eclecticism was to survive only as a method for interpreting the history of philosophy: “On s’obstine à représenter l’éclectisme comme la doctrine à laquelle on daigne attacher notre nom”, observes Cousin in the ‘Avant-Propos’ (dated 15th June, 1853) to his most ‘committed’ work from a theoretical viewpoint. “Nous le déclarons: *l’éclectisme nous est bien cher, sans doute, car il est à nos yeux la lumière de l’histoire de la philosophie, mais le foyer de cette lumière est ailleurs*. L’éclectisme est une des applications les plus importantes et les plus utiles de la philosophie que nous professons, mais il n’en est pas le principe. Notre vraie doctrine, notre vrai drapeau est le *spiritualisme*, cette philosophie aussi solide que généreuse, qui commence avec Socrate et Platon, que l’Évangile a répandue dans le monde, que Descartes a mise sous les formes sévères du génie moderne, qui a été au XVII^e siècle une des gloires et des forces de la patrie, qui a péri avec la grandeur nationale au XVIII^e siècle [here we find again the opposition between the two modern centuries] et qui au commencement de celui-ci M. Royer-Collard est venu réhabiliter dans l’enseignement publique, pendant que M. de Chateaubriand, Mme de Staël, M. Quatremère de Quincy la transportaient dans la littérature et dans les arts”: V. Cousin, *Du vrai, du beau et du bien*, Deuxième édition (Paris, Didier, 1854), pp. II–IV, italics ours.

It is significant that Cousin relates philosophy to the image of “marching together under the same flag”, almost referring to the epic tones of the *Marseillaise*. The political unrest which was to lead to the July revolution became manifest in those months in the halls of the Sorbonne thanks to the “triumvirs” Guizot, Cousin, and Villemain, that is, the heralds of political liberalism, for whom the objective of the “conquest of truth” was all at one with the achievement of freedom. This was the mixture of cultural commitment and political militancy which thrilled the crowds of listeners, and indeed the last, much cheered lecture of the *Introduction à l’histoire de la philosophie* closes with an exaltation of the *Charte*, considered as closely connected to that *optimum* which for Cousin was represented by constitutional monarchy (*Cours I*, lesson 13, pp. 359–360). Equally significant is the fact that, in the ‘Préface’ to Tennemann, Cousin defends eclecticism and compares the “exclusive doctrines” in the philosophical field to the “parties” in the political field, both driven by “tyrannical ambitions” representing a threat to the general interest of the nation (p. 6). A few years later, concluding the ‘Préface’ to the second edition of the *Fragmens philosophiques* (1833), he was to repeat vigorously that “my political belief is therefore in accordance with my philosophical belief, and both of them remain above the insults (*outrages*) of the parties”: *Oeuvres*, II (Brussels, 1841), p. 26b.

But Cousin was equally determined to establish another connection, that between philosophy and the history of philosophy: “If this philosophy must be eclectic”, and by now it is clear that, because of a higher historical necessity, it can only be eclectic, “it must be supported by the history of philosophy. For it is evident that all eclectic philosophy rests necessarily on a profound knowledge of all the systems of which it claims to combine the essential and true elements. Besides, *what is the history of philosophy, if not a constant lesson in eclecticism?* What does the history of philosophy teach us, if not the fact that all systems are as old as the history of philosophy itself and are inherent in the human mind, which produces them on the first day and reproduces them unceasingly; that trying to establish domination by only one of them is a vain attempt, which, if successful, would become the death of philosophy; and that, consequently, we should do nothing but honour the human mind, acknowledge its freedom, observe the laws governing this freedom and the fundamental systems emanating from these laws, let these different systems improve one another unceasingly, without trying to destroy any of them, seeking and drawing out the immortal portion of truth enfolded in each of them, thanks to which each one is brother to all the others and legitimate child of the human mind?” (p. 8, italics ours). As the supreme product of the history of philosophy, understood as *res gestae*, eclecticism therefore coincides with “philosophical tolerance” (Cousin, like Degérando, had previously (p. 7) spoken of a “treaty of peace”: this expression is also present in Laromiguière [*Leçons de philosophie* (Paris, 1829), II, pp. 172–173]). Philosophical tolerance, in turn, necessarily implies a “profound study of all systems”, that is to say, the history of philosophy as *historia rerum gestarum*: this is the circle, or rather the spiral, that makes the historiography of philosophy a superior activity which coincides with the act of “practising philosophy” at the highest level of theoretical as well as historical awareness.

These ideas on the link between philosophy and the history of philosophy are extensively developed in the *Introduction à l'histoire de la philosophie*, whose aim seems to be to constitute the French counterpart (much less systematic) to the *Einleitung* Hegel added to his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, which Cousin, after submitting repeated requests to Hegel himself and to his pupils, had succeeded in obtaining some written notes of, together with those relating to the course on the philosophy of history. The Hegelian flavour is clear in the superior and decisive role Cousin grants the history of philosophy, within a perspective embracing reality as a whole: "Philosophy is, with respect to humanity, what humanity is with respect to nature; similarly, the history of philosophy represents, with respect to the history of nature, what it represents with respect to the history of humanity. A great thought, a divine thought, is thus inserted into the physical world, but this happens without it knowing itself by itself; only through the different reigns of nature, and thanks to progressive work does this thought come to a knowledge of itself in man; at first it only knows itself imperfectly there; once again, it is step by step and – so to speak – reign by reign, and thanks to the progressive work of history, that it attains not only consciousness but also a full and complete intelligence of itself. This absolute and appropriate intelligence of thought through itself is the history of philosophy" (*Cours I*, lesson 4, p. 91).

Cousin had already repeatedly emphasised the superiority of the historiography of philosophy compared to all other histories ("industrial" and political history, the history of the arts and religions) because "the philosophical element of human nature is superior to all the other elements" (3, p. 71). Indeed, philosophy is "the light of all lights, the authority of authorities"; it "destroys nothing but accepts, explains, and dominates everything"; it constitutes, in a Hegelian sense, "the inner element" of each epoch, "the most alive and highest consciousness of an epoch" (1, pp. 36–37; 3, pp. 74–75). The history of philosophy is, in turn, "the climax of history, it is the only true history, it is – this must be said – the history of history (*histoire de l'histoire*)"; it is therefore a "special history" (as a history of reason) as well as a "very general history", which presupposes all the other branches of history (3, pp. 86–87; 4, pp. 91–92). Consequently, the historiography of philosophy (which was born in Greece but remained in a condition of infancy there)²⁷ was the last to be fully developed, after the other "histories" had developed, which took place during the eighteenth century, when "for the first time humanity started to be broadly interested in itself", thus attaining self-awareness (12, p. 305). But it is above all its relationship with the evolution of thought which determines the characteristics of the historiography of philosophy: "A large philosophical movement is a *sine qua non* and at the same time a sure principle for the rise of an analogous movement in the history of philosophy [considered precisely as *historia rerum gestarum*]. Every large speculative movement contains its history of philosophy in itself, and sooner or later it necessarily produces it". This perspective on the history of philosophy

²⁷ *Cours I*, 3, p. 88, where the "chronicles of ancient philosophy" produced by the Greeks are linked to the more general development of chronology and history, which was itself made possible by the freedom which Greece, unlike the East, enjoyed.

corresponds to the philosophical perspective, because – here the centrality of the knowing subject reappears – “it is always from the point of view of our own ideas that we picture the ideas of others” (12, p. 307; this striking phrase, which we would today interpret hermeneutically, should in fact be related to the psychological basis from which all philosophical systems derive, which historiography should merely “observe” and “explain”).

On the basis of this, Cousin resolutely arranges eighteenth-century historiographical production and relates it to the main currents of thought prevailing in that century. The “first movement of modern philosophy”, Cartesianism, found its theoretical systematisation in Wolff, after which “there was nothing left for it but to produce a history of philosophy”; this is what happened with Brucker, who combined these “intrinsic conditions” into an “outer condition” as well, that is to say, a vast erudition, so that he can be rightly considered to be “the father of the history of philosophy”, just as Descartes is the father of modern philosophy (12, pp. 311–316; cf. *Models*, II, pp. 564–565). Nevertheless, Brucker’s admirable work could not represent “the last word in the history of philosophy. [...] The human mind had to take a step forward”. Thus there appeared “the second movement of modern philosophy”, the conflict between sensualism and idealism, which on a historiographical plane was shown precisely by the great works of the empiricist Tiedemann and the Kantian Tennemann. As for the latter, Cousin recognises his merit in perceiving (albeit indistinctly) and expressing (albeit feebly) “the philosophical movement of history”, but he judges Kant’s philosophy to be inappropriate to understand “the countless systems the human mind has disseminated over the course of many centuries” (12, pp. 332–334; cf. *Models*, III, pp. 921–922).

We have thus reached the epoch of Cousin (and Hegel, who, however, is never mentioned in the *Introduction*). After Tiedemann and Tennemann, in Germany there has been “no remarkable work on the history of philosophy of an original and epoch-making stature” (indeed, Hegel’s *Vorlesungen* were still unpublished...); hence there took place in the historiography of philosophy something that had already happened on a historical plane after Herder: “Universal histories of philosophy were followed by partial essays concerning particular schools and particular systems and by in-depth monographs”. This is a period of *décomposition*, which must necessarily be followed – this is how science advances – by a period of *recomposition*, which will lead to a “new general history of philosophy” (13, pp. 337–340). But this requires a “new philosophical movement” capable of overcoming the opposition between sensualism and idealism, “which has reached its end point with Fichte’s absolute subjectivity of the self”: this movement is precisely eclecticism, “which renews both the history of philosophy and philosophy itself” (13, p. 349) and of which Cousin intends to be the herald, with the ambitious aim of succeeding not only Tiedemann and Tennemann, but also Locke and Condillac, Kant and Fichte. And we may ask ourselves here if there is any place for his friend Hegel...

5.1.4 *Cours de philosophie (or Cours de l’histoire de la philosophie)*

5.1.4.1 Initially, the lessons of the *Cours de philosophie* came out in instalments – one for each lesson – and they were later bound together in a volume. Volume I

(*Introduction à l'histoire de la philosophie*) contains 13 lessons devoted to theoretical and methodological problems, as well as the periodization, and opens with an 'Avis des Éditeurs' (*Cours I*, pp. 7–8) which presents a synthesis of Cousin's position. There follows a detailed 'Table analytique des matières contenues dans ce volume' (pp. 9–17) divided into lessons, which is then partitioned and, in the form of a 'Sommaire', placed at the beginning of each lesson. The text offers an accurate account of the 13 lessons (covering the period from the 17th April to the 17th July, 1828) and also records the applause and other reactions of the audience. Volume II, which is preceded by an 'Avis des Éditeurs' (*Cours II*, pp. 113–114), contains 25 lessons accompanied by a summary and chiefly devoted to eighteenth-century philosophy; lessons 4–12 (pp. 143–226) reconstruct the history of philosophy from the origins up to the eighteenth century. On the whole, the *Cours de philosophie* (or *Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie*, depending on which edition one refers to) provides a general history of philosophy.

5.1.4.2 Periodization has a central role in Cousin's perspective, in which a concern for the history of philosophy is placed within a more general, fervent interest in a philosophical account of the path followed by humanity, which is viewed with intense historical optimism as "history is God's rule made visible" (*Cours I*, 7, pp. 198–199). On the basis of the fundamental link between psychology and history, the steps on this path correspond to the development of human consciousness and its faculties, and even constitute a "confirmation" of it.²⁸ In the first 'Préface' to the *Fragmens philosophiques*, for example, Cousin had already adopted a historical framework in order to illustrate the distinction between *spontanéité* and *réflexion* ("in the history of the human species, the Oriental world represents this first movement by which powerful spontaneity has provided mankind with its imperishable foundation; the pagan world, and even more the Christian world, represent reflection, developing little by little, which is added to this spontaneity, dismantles and reassembles it by using its typical freedom, while the spirit of the world glides over all its forms, still remaining in the centre [...]"). In lesson 7 of the *Introduction*, Cousin establishes instead three great epochs in history, on the basis of the same "laws" that govern nature, human consciousness, and God himself.²⁹ The first epoch is characterised by the dominance of the idea of the infinite and unity; in the second epoch the self acquires self-awareness and develops the idea of the "finite"; finally, in the third epoch humanity faces the theme of the "necessary relationship between the finite and the infinite" (*Cours I*, 7, pp. 193–196).

²⁸ *Cours I*, 2, p. 44: "Ainsi, comme la nature humaine est la matière et la base de l'histoire, l'histoire est pour ainsi dire le juge de la nature humaine, et l'analyse historique est la contre-épreuve décisive de l'analyse psychologique".

²⁹ *Cours I*, 7 p. 197: "L'histoire ne réfléchit pas seulement tout le mouvement de l'humanité; mais comme l'humanité est le résumé de l'univers, lequel est une manifestation de Dieu, il suit qu'en dernière analyse l'histoire n'est pas moins que le dernier contre coup de l'action divine".

Lesson 2 provides a more strict periodization of the history of philosophy, which finally corresponds to the history of civilisation itself, because the five constitutive elements of human nature (the notions of useful, rightful, beautiful, divine, and true, corresponding to “industry”, State, art, religion, and philosophy, respectively), have been constantly operating during each of the three great epochs, although the internal relationship between these elements has changed. From this perspective, philosophy has therefore always existed, albeit in different forms, and its development through time follows that of each individual (according to a perfect correlation, as the positivists were later to say, between ontogenesis and phylogenesis). In the “historical existence” of philosophy we should distinguish first of all the Oriental epoch, which is marked by the unity and envelopment or contraction (*enveloppement*) of the five elements mentioned above, among which the religious element is definitely predominant, so that in the East, particularly in India, “philosophy was in general the reflection of religion” (2, p. 47). Oriental thought, which in those years aroused wide interest in Europe, has been the object of two opposite judgements, both wrong: one, quite reductively, considers this thought only as “a heap of absurd superstitions” arising from a fervid imagination; the other tends to “view this cradle of mankind as the fatherland of the highest philosophy”, thus confusing the common knowledge of truth (which is present in all epochs and all men) with the mature practice of that “superior form of thought” which is philosophy. The latter, properly understood, only achieved independence in Greece and in the Mediterranean area, which constitute “the empire of freedom and movement, just as the high Indo-Chinese plateau is the empire of immobility and despotism” (pp. 49–51).

The civil and cultural development of the second great epoch, the Graeco-Roman, therefore led philosophy to liberate itself from its original religious basis and progressively reject “all symbolic form”,³⁰ reaching – with Socrates – the form of pure *réflexion*: by doubting and teaching to doubt, the Athenian philosopher did not elaborate any specific doctrines or systems, but “stirred the mind (*esprit*) and made it fruitful thanks to analysis”, inducing his interlocutors to develop awareness and be clear to themselves and others. Hence the various and opposite directions followed by his disciples, who, however, shared the practice of free rational enquiry. The movement Socrates had imparted to philosophy (*le mouvement socratique*) became exhausted after ten centuries with the Justinian decree (529 AD) which ordered the closing of schools. The last Greek thinkers, the Neoplatonists, brought philosophy back into religion, from which it had once departed with violence, but this does not mean at all that they were less philosophers than their predecessors or

³⁰ In the second part of the *Cours*, Cousin distinguishes between three epochs in Greece: that of folk myths or “pure religion”, the “theological” epoch (characterised by mysteries, whose founder was Orpheus), and the philosophical epoch; the latter knew a phase of “infancy” (the Ionic and Pythagorean school strictly speaking – from Thales to the sophists – which was dominated by an interest in the philosophy of nature) and a phase of “maturity”, which constitutes “Greek philosophy *par excellence*” and the starting point of which is Socrates (*Cours II*, 7, pp. 167b–168b and 170a). Further on, Greek philosophy is again divided into “three great epochs”, the objects of which were, in order, nature (Pythagorean and Ionic philosophy), man (the age of Plato and Aristotle), and God (Neoplatonism) (8, p. 184a).

that they betrayed Socratic teaching: “What had been rejected by the former through reflection was admired by the latter once again through reflection; here, sirs, we see the unity of Greek philosophy, from the year 470 before the common era [from the year of Socrates’ birth] to the year 529” (p. 56).

Cousin turns then to the third great epoch, “modern history”, which is subdivided into two – and only two – other epochs: the age of contraction (*enveloppement*) and that of development (*développement*). The first corresponds to the Middle Ages, which is viewed as the “painful, slow, and bloody formation of all the elements of modern civilisation”, and in which the religious element of Christianity that inspires all the other elements predominates. The philosophy of the Middle Ages rests therefore on Scripture, and the unitary and constitutive element of Scholasticism lies in its operating “within a circle it had not outlined autonomously but which had been forced on it by an authority different from its own”. Cousin observes, however, that although it manifested itself in a religious form, the *esprit humain* was necessarily “aware of this form”, imparting a more methodical character to religious teaching in monasteries and then, thanks to universities, developing an audacious freedom of debate, which gave rise to a multiplicity of schools greater than those of Greece and the ancient East (p. 58).³¹

The other epoch of modern history is represented by *philosophie moderne*, which is introduced, as a period of transition, by the “philosophy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries” (Cousin does not use the expression *Renaissance des lettres*). Modern philosophy is subdivided into two periods: the philosophy of the seventeenth century, extending more or less to the middle of the following century, and the philosophy of the eighteenth century properly understood, which goes up to the beginning of the nineteenth century (*Cours II*, 10, p. 201b; 11, p. 213a). The date of birth of modern philosophy is emphatically given as 1637, the year in which the *Discours de la méthode* was published; method is indeed the greatest merit of Descartes, who is defined as “new Socrates”. In comparing the two philosophers, and hence Greek and modern philosophy, Cousin observes that “Socrates was free reflection; Descartes is free reflection elevated to the height of a method, or rather, is method in its severest form. [...] No doubt, sirs, Descartes has a system, but this is not his chief glory; his glory, like that of Socrates, is having placed the philosophical spirit in the modern world, which has produced and will produce thousands of systems” (*Cours I*, p. 60).

Indeed, from 1637 onwards, the *esprit philosophique* has greatly developed, giving rise to a multiplicity of systems which can be grouped into few great schools (sensualism, idealism, scepticism, and mysticism). Apart from some differences,

³¹In the second part of the *Cours*, the beginning of Scholasticism takes place in the age of Charlemagne, “the genius of the Middle Ages”, while its end coincides with the crisis of ecclesiastical authority and the secular power’s total independence from the Church. Cousin takes up the traditional three-fold division of Scholasticism: the first epoch goes from Alcuin up to Peter Lombard; the second is represented by “three superior men” (Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus); and the third begins with Raymond Lull and Roger Bacon and ends with Gerson and the late followers of nominalism, such as Gabriel Biel (*Cours II*, 9, pp. 189–200).

modern philosophy shows a fundamental unity, which consists in “making use of reason with absolute freedom”, going much beyond the bravest medieval thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas, Abelard, and Scotus Eriugena. “Today”, observes Cousin with satisfaction, “emancipation is complete; in fact, the philosophy of our age is dominated by a sort of apparent scepticism, an excessively negative spirit which manifests the prevailing need for reflection and, at the same time, the infancy of the art of reflecting”, as happened in Greece with the sophists. But the optimist Cousin, far from envisaging the outcome of negative thought, judges this phenomenon to be an inevitable phase of transition experienced by those who have just been liberated and have not yet reached the complete awareness typical of a free man. Firmly trusting human progress, he expects it in a relatively near future: after overcoming “the infancy of modern philosophy, [...] the number of thinkers, free men, and philosophers, will increase and extend relentlessly, so much so that it will represent the majority of mankind. But certainly not tomorrow, sirs, this day will shine on the world” (pp. 63–64).

5.1.4.3 The theme of Oriental philosophy, the historical origin of philosophy, is the first test for Cousin’s mode of ‘practising’ the general history of philosophy. Already approached and discussed on various occasions, this subject shows considerable fluctuation demonstrating the conflict between history and psychology, that is to say, between a decidedly evolutionary and progressive outlook and a psychological presumptive structure which brings the historical course of thought into a fixed and recurring scheme. As we have just seen, in the first volume of the *Cours*, Cousin adopts a balanced position and assigns an inchoative function to Oriental thought in the history of philosophy. But in the article entitled ‘Du vrai commencement de l’histoire de la philosophie’, which was reprinted in the *Nouveaux fragments philosophiques* (1828), he insists on the distinction between the “history of philosophy” in a proper sense and *histoire de l’esprit humain et de l’humanité*, and tends to exclude from the history of philosophy not only the antediluvian, postdiluvian, and “exotic” philosophy that had been analysed by Brucker (as well as “all hypotheses which derive from an alleged savage state or from a primitive civilisation considered to be superior to subsequent civilisations”), but Oriental thought itself.³² This is to be attributed to the fact that the East, if compared in its entirety to the West, “presents the features of that rich and powerful spontaneity that preceded the age of reflection in the human species”. Indeed, in the East, *réflexion* was not completely lacking, but it was still unable to subject its rich array of mythological and symbolic intuitions to “methodical judgement”. In conclusion, “the East, with its religions, its universal symbolism, and its extraordinary priests belongs to the mythologist rather than the philosopher. Hence the philosopher will take care not to linger over the East and move on to Greece immediately. [...] It was Greece which gave philosophy to mankind” (*Oeuvres*, II, p. 277ab).

³² V. Cousin, *Oeuvres* (Brussels, 1840–1841), II, p. 276b: “Il y a plus, il faudrait peut-être retrancher de l’histoire de la philosophie toute la première époque vraiment historique de l’humanité, c’est-à-dire l’époque orientale”.

In the second volume of the *Cours*, however, the pendulum swings in the opposite direction. The aim is now to go over the whole history of philosophy from its origins in order to show the antecedents of the four philosophical systems (sensualism, idealism, scepticism, and mysticism), in the light of which Cousin intends to interpret eighteenth-century philosophy. Seen in this perspective, Indian philosophy – to which Cousin reduces Oriental philosophy due to an inadequate knowledge of the rich thought produced in China, where “we may notice the existence of more than one system of metaphysics thought and elaborated in the fashion of the West” – becomes paradigmatic, as it is defined as the cradle (*berceau*) of philosophy. Indeed, it is “so vast that we encounter all systems of philosophy in it and it comes to constitute an entire philosophical world, so we may literally say that the history of the philosophy of India is a compendium (*abrégé*) of the entire history of philosophy” (*Cours II*, 5, p. 153b; cf. Vermeren, pp. 133–138; Ragghianti, pp. 169–206). Referring in particular to the memoirs submitted by Henry Thomas Colebrooke to the *Royal Asiatic Society* (1824–1827), long excerpts of which had appeared in French magazines, Cousin reconstructs the movement which started from the sacred books of India (the *Veda*), defined as the “basis of all further development”, and led progressively to the establishment of independent schools of thought, in which we can already see the four “fundamental elements” of the history of philosophy.

Sensualism in the first place appears in Kanāda’s atomistic physics and in Kapila’s *Sāṃkhya* school in particular. By basing knowledge on sensation and induction rather than on the authority of the sacred books, Kapila attained knowledge of the 25 principles of reality, the first of which is Nature (*Prakṛiti*) and the last the soul, understood as an “animate atom” residing in the brain. Moreover, anticipating the arguments of Aenesidemus and then Hume, Kapila radically criticised the notion of cause, bringing sensualism to the extremes proper to it, that is to say, materialism, fatalism, and atheism (5, pp. 156a–158a). *Nyāya*’s system on the other hand was associated with *idealism*: besides elaborating an “audacious dialectic” which has many similarities with Aristotle’s theory of the categories and the ordinary syllogism (to such an extent that we wonder whether “the Greeks were the masters or the disciples of the Indians”), the *Nyāya* placed at the peak of its speculative system the doctrine of the soul as distinct from the body and its organs, infinite in its principle, and possessing special attributes, which corresponds to a clear profession of spiritualism. This line of thought was intensified by the Vedānta philosophy, which ended by denying the existence of matter itself. The conflict between these two dogmatisms was inevitable and gave rise to *scepticism*, which in India did not take the form of a proper system but manifested itself in scattered and isolated propositions, which seem to be the expression of an “absolute nihilism, the last product of scepticism”, and are present above all in Kapila’s *Sāṃkhya* (6, p. 161ab). This small presence of scepticism is paralleled by an “overabundance of mysticism”, which Cousin illustrates in detail with the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which had been published in Bonn in 1823 by August Wilhelm von Schlegel and Wilhelm von Humboldt; it is *mysticism* that “closes all systems of India and seals the circle of this great philosophical movement, whose various degrees”, and here Cousin reiterates the connection between history and psychology, “correspond to the various points of view adopted by human intelligence” (6, p. 167a).

The large amount of space reserved for Indian philosophy (no less than 15 pages out of a total of 62 quarto pages that the *Cours II* devotes to the general history of philosophy up to the eighteenth century) is naturally justified by the novelty of this subject, which had become available to a cultivated European readership only a few years earlier. Cousin acknowledges that, because of the lack of chronological data, the description of this philosophy follows “an order which is to some extent hypothetical”; on the other hand, this “order of systems” appears to be “perfectly laid down” in Greek philosophy, whose chronology is certain. The absence of sacred books like the *Veda* among the Greeks determined the rapid development of a proneness to independent research. An initial interest in the philosophy of nature followed two clearly separate directions, according to whether attention was centred on phenomena as such (object of sensible knowledge) or on the relationships between phenomena (object of mathematical abstraction). Hence the appearance of the two first schools: the Ionic school, in which sensualism led to the first manifestation of materialism and (with Heraclitus) of fatalism, and whose “necessary adjunct” was the pantheistic and atheistic atomism; and the Pythagorean school which, conversely, “founded the concrete element on the abstract element” and elaborated a “mathematical idealism”, placing – in the field of astronomy – the sun at the centre of the world and considering the soul as “a number that moves by itself” and whose root lies in unity, hence in God. Being unity, God represents perfection; the process of “perfecting” consists in proceeding from variety to unity, and the good lies in this. Cousin appears to concern himself in particular with the political implications of Pythagoreanism (“If you like, the glory of this school consists in having introduced morals into politics, but its fault was to wish to reduce politics to morals and turn the town into a sort of monastery”). As for the aristocratic tendency typical of this politics, Cousin observes – in the tone of someone who has no nostalgia for the *ancien régime* – that “this aristocracy was entirely moral, [...] but it was nevertheless an aristocracy, and all the more dreadful because it burdened human creatures with the whole weight of the sacred idea of virtue” (7, p. 170a).

The idealist school of Pythagoreanism found its last phase of development and its “extreme result” (this expression exists in the vocabulary of the history of philosophy up to the present day...) in the school of Elea. The Pythagorean link between harmony and unity induced Xenophanes to value *unity* more than *variety* – the same variety which had not been denied by Pythagoras and had been at the centre of the exclusive attention of the Ionians. “Very soon Parmenides, who succeeded Xenophanes and followed the example of his master, manifested such concern for the idea of unity as to totally neglect the idea of variety, albeit perhaps without denying it. Zeno went further: he did not neglect the idea of variety [but] denied it, hence he denied the idea of movement, and hence the existence of the world”. With a clever interplay of concepts, which was typical of him and long remained successful in French (and Italian) historiography, Cousin observes that the two opposite schools, “exclusively admitting either unity without variety or variety without unity, led either to the negation of matter and the world or to the negation of free thought and God, either to an insufficient pantheism or to a chimerical theism, and give themselves up to the same conflicts we have seen in India between the

Vedānta school and Kapila's *Sāṃkhya* school" (7, p. 170ab). These philosophical battles also had similar results, producing reciprocal confutations and therefore the conviction that nothing certain existed in the two schools, despite the attempt by Anaxagoras and Empedocles to elaborate "laborious combinations". Indeed, there is nothing certain if the measure of all things lies in the senses, as was held by the Ionic school; conversely, "if one admits only unity without any variety", as was maintained by the school of Elea, "it is clear that everything is in everything and everything looks alike, and it is possible to say of one thing that it is true and false at the same time [...]". This led to the affirmation of the scepticism of the sophists, which, nevertheless, had the result of "awakening the sense of criticism" and stimulating new research.

In Greek philosophy, the transition to maturity was marked by a profound change in its primary interest and therefore in its method of approach. Enquiry was no longer centred on the philosophy of nature but on "moral, social, human philosophy"; this, however, did not mean that "man constitutes its only object; on the contrary, it aimed, as it always must do, at acquiring knowledge of the universal system of things, but it pursued this aim by resting on a fixed starting point, knowledge of human nature". Socrates was of course the author of this radical change, which, "in modern terms", amounts to placing "psychology as the basis of all legitimate ontology" (7, p. 171ab; on the "Socratic question" in Cousin, cf. Ragghianti, pp. 128–146). Nevertheless, this essential advance did not prevent a renewal of "exclusive systems" among Socrates' pupils themselves, as happened with Antisthenes and Aristippus, who founded two opposing moral systems, or with Euclid of Megara, who mixed Socratic wisdom with Eleaticism thus making the former degenerate into scepticism. Apart from this "insignificant beginning", it was with Plato and Aristotle that the true, great evolution of Socratic philosophy took place, with a timely new appearance of idealism and sensualism, albeit without "eccentricities" and within reasonable bounds (7, p. 171b).

The brief description of the two great Greek philosophers seems to follow seventeenth-century *comparaisons*, such as *La comparaison de Platon et d'Aristote* of father Rapin (cf. *Models*, II, pp. 40–47). According to Socratic teaching, "psychology" is the starting point: both thinkers based themselves on the ideas or general notions present in our minds and distinct from the senses, but they followed opposite directions. Whereas Plato rose from general ideas to absolute ideas and hence to God, aspiring to leave the world, Aristotle sank into the world in order to study it systematically in its various aspects: "Plato was the genius of abstraction, Aristotle of classification. The former showed greater elevation, the latter greater extension". Cousin, however, rejects the image – which was widespread during the age of the Enlightenment – of a sensist Aristotle, observing that he distinguished between three classes of truths: truths inferred by demonstration; "general truths which constitute the basis of every demonstration and arise from reason itself" (and which are reflected in the doctrine of the categories); and "particular truths" provided by the senses. Proceeding with this comparison, Plato was above all a dialectician, Aristotle a logician; one a mathematician, the other a naturalist; both of them assumed that the soul is distinct from the body, but according to the Stagirite it is

also inseparable from the body. Opposite directions can also be observed with reference to aesthetics (the ideal beautiful is opposed to art considered as imitation of nature), morals (Aristotle aimed at governing the passions rather than at destroying them, but his theory of the golden mean is arbitrary and needs a superior criterion), and politics, in which the Platonic principle of justice is far removed from the Aristotelian principle of usefulness. As for Aristotle, Cousin appreciates in particular his work on *Constitutions*, in which the different forms of government are described and classified “with impassive composure”, just as Montesquieu was to do in his *Esprit des lois*. As regards style, Plato sometimes committed “poetical overabundance (*luxé*)”, while Aristotle showed a certain meagreness and, due to an excessive use of the faculty of reason, “methodically reduced everything to an undetectable dust, unlike Plato who, even when he got lost in the heavens, continued to be surrounded by bright clouds” (7, p. 175b).

The moderation shown by Plato and Aristotle in referring to Pythagorean idealism and Ionic sensualism, respectively, disappeared with their successors, since Xenocrates shifted towards openly Pythagorean positions, and those like Theophrastus, Dicaearchus, Aristoxenus, and Strato came to mechanistic materialism. This controversy (*querelle*) was later taken up by the opposing schools of Stoicism and Epicureanism, in which, however, the “systematic genius” of Greek philosophy, perfectly perceptible in Plato and Aristotle, lost strength and “proceeded on level ground”, so that the great metaphysical themes were replaced by a common interest in moral philosophy (8, p. 177b). According to both schools, this was the objective of logic and physics. The originality of Epicureanism lay in the distinction between pleasure in motion and spiritual pleasure, which was considered to correspond to the rest of the soul: unlike Aristippus, Epicurus defended virtue but only as a means to reach happiness. The ensuing “social morals”, founded on a utilitarian pact, is judged negatively because, by seeking inner peace, it diverted the individual from all engagement, both with respect to the family and politics. And here we have the logical consequences of Epicureanism: “Resting on sensation as its only foundation, it comes at first to materialism and atheism, and then, in the field of morals, to absolute – both private and public – egoism”, something which could “legitimately arrive at the point of iniquity and crime, but usually limited itself to mere indifference towards others, when it was mitigated by that great inconsistency that in most cases man, thanks to God, is forced on the philosopher”. Considered to be “the last phase in the development of Greek sensualism”, Epicureanism thus replaced Kapila’s Indian sensualism “on the scene of the general history of philosophy”, surpassing it in extension, rigour, and clarity (8, p. 180ab).

In presenting Stoicism too Cousin begins with the theory of knowledge, trying to keep it as distant as possible from sensualism, owing to the “perfect contrast” he establishes between Epicurean and Stoic philosophy. The intelligible knowledge of the Stoics is therefore assigned a dimension which is “essentially independent of sensibility, although not separate from it”, while the “common notion” or “anticipation” is associated with “that which among the moderns would be defined as the *a priori* conception”. Similarly, Cousin claims that “true Stoicism” has a view of the world inspired by providentialism (rather than by fatalism), marked by dualism

(rather than by pantheism), hence of a theistic nature and oriented towards a certain optimism. Stoic morals lead to a “law which is totally opposed” to the Epicurean one, because “justice governed by reason must be practised for itself, not for the sake of its consequences”, that is to say, for its results, whether helpful or not. Nevertheless, Stoicism also contains some “aberrations”, such as the fact that it indistinctly places all bad actions on the same level, the equivalence between happiness and conformity with reason, or the lack of civic commitment arising from “apathy”. Indeed, a total removal of the passions implies the disappearance of the “principle of action, [...] which can alone bring man to conformity with reason and lead him to a relationship with God”; a closer examination shows therefore that “Stoic morals is fundamentally nothing other than morals for slaves, which was excellent in Epictetus but useless for the world of Marcus Aurelius”. In conclusion, “Stoicism represents Pythagoras’ and Plato’s idealism when it is taken, in practice, to extremes as to greatness and eccentricity” (8, p. 182a).

The conflict between Epicureanism and Stoicism, which represented extreme manifestations of sensualism and idealism, led necessarily to scepticism; this took place in fact on both fronts: idealism gave rise to the scepticism of the Middle Academy which, with Arcesilaus, contested the Stoic principle of the conformity between the image or “phantasm” and the object in itself (a position taken up again by Carneades, then by Ockham, and later by Arnauld, Berkeley, Hume, and the Scottish school), while real scepticism originated from sensualism and found two fervent supporters in Aenesidemus (who anticipated Hume’s criticism of the link between cause and effect) and Sextus Empiricus. Two centuries after the beginning of the Christian era, scepticism seemed therefore to indicate the removal of all dogmatism and the dissolution of all the other philosophical schools, thus condemning the *esprit humain* to “immobility”. This was an unacceptable outcome, observes Cousin, because “to exist means, for the mind, to act, to judge, to think, and therefore to believe”. Furthermore, since the previous philosophical tendencies had cancelled each other out, the exercise of discursive reason on the basis of sensible knowledge was given up, and recourse was made instead to immediate intuition: hence the establishment of mysticism, the last and desperate resource of the human reason, whose object is the direct elevation of the soul to God.

This is “necessary progress” made by Greek philosophy as a result of an “internal movement” within it but also determined by external causes: during the second century AD, ancient civilisation had reached the fullness that precedes crisis: “in the world nothing great remained to be done, and the only refuge of the soul was the invisible world”; hence the interest in the religious domain, which was favoured, in Alexandria, by the contact of the Greek spirit with the Eastern spirit (8, p. 184ab). The Alexandrian school was influenced by eclecticism, that is to say, by the harmonisation of the different trends present in Greek philosophy, but in fact what prevailed was the Pythagorean and Platonic tradition together with the “Eastern spirit”. Cousin observes here that “when there is no fair amount of scepticism, there is no true eclecticism either, and the result of this can only be immoderate dogmatism” (8, p. 185a), as happened precisely in the case of Alexandrian thought, which was entirely centred around theodicy.

The “fundamental mistake” of this thought lay in conceiving of God in himself as absolute unity, in relation to which multiplicity and duality represent a lower grade; but God, as an intelligence, presupposes the thinking-thought duality, and, as a productive power, is such only on the condition that he produces an indefinite multiplicity. It follows that “God, as a pure being, as a substance, is superior to God as a cause, as an intelligence and a power; consequently, in general, power and action, intelligence and thought are inferior to existence in itself, to absolute unity”. But this is untenable, because duality and multiplicity are nothing but an expression of unity, and “a unity which does not unfold as duality and multiplicity would be a merely abstract unity”, namely, devoid of ontological consistency. The immediate consequence of this mistake is to consider the world (which, nevertheless, should reflect intelligence, beauty, and divine harmony) as “a development inferior to its principle, [...] as a fall”, so it would be better if God had not produced it. The allegedly excessive optimism of the Alexandrians therefore resolved itself into pessimism, but “in order for philosophy to reach true optimism”, concludes Cousin, “it needed Christianity, seventeen centuries, and Leibniz” (8, pp. 185b–186b). Given these premises, no wonder the development of the Alexandrian school was strewn with repeated “strayings”: Plotinus and Porphyry avoided “eccentricity”, but Iamblichus made mysticism fall into theurgy, while Julian the Apostate embodied “mysticism in operation”, trying to “show what Alexandrian mysticism could do, or rather could not do”. The verdict on Proclus is different; Cousin indeed had edited his works and, because of his remarkable ability to elaborate analysis, he defined him as “the Aristotle of Alexandrian mysticism”. It is with him that the school of Alexandria and Greek philosophy itself come to an end, because after extreme recourse to mysticism there remained no other “philosophical element”; in order for a new philosophical movement to appear, it was necessary for “a new world able to gradually produce a new philosophy” to emerge (8, p. 188a).

The new world is represented by Christian Europe of the Middle Ages, “the cradle of modern society, just as Scholasticism is the cradle of modern philosophy”, that is to say, its “vestibule”. As it had already happened in the case of India and ancient Greece, in this case too philosophy originated gradually from religion, waiting for “the moment when it was able to seek truth by itself and at its own risk” (9, p. 188b). In the *Introduction à l’histoire de la philosophie*, Cousin’s attitude towards medieval thought seems to fluctuate, as in the case of Eastern philosophy. Indeed, on the one hand, he does not hesitate to speak of the “philosophy of the Middle Ages”, and even predicts an intense revival of interest in Scholasticism, as had already happened for other aspects of medieval civilisation. On the other hand, while recognising the truth of the Christian religion, by which Scholasticism was inspired, he points out that Scholasticism did not yet represent “thought according to the absolute freedom that characterises philosophy strictly understood”; hence Scholasticism, strictly speaking, should not be seen as philosophy (*Cours I*, 2, p. 59). This ambivalence appears again in the second part of the *Cours*: while recognising the limited, temporary, and subordinate (hence hardly philosophical) nature of Scholasticism, Cousin proclaims that it is still philosophy, and as soon as it acquires some autonomy, it “adopts its own pace and its natural tendencies”,

which are obviously founded on the “four opposing systems” (*Cours II*, 9, p. 189b). However, before applying his fourfold scheme of development to medieval thought too, Cousin turns to another key to interpretation, based on the relationship between “theological foundation” and philosophical *form*, in such a way that the sequence of the three epochs of Scholasticism has the following features:

- (I) The “absolute subordination of philosophy to theology”, consequently the “admirable greatness of the theological foundation” (from Saint Augustine) corresponds to the “poverty of form”, which is granted only a section of Aristotle’s *Organon*; in this period, the most conspicuous figures are the “metaphysician” Anselm of Aosta, an antecedent of Descartes, and the extremely erudite Abelard, who united “the study of Cicero and that of Saint Augustine” and also improved *form* with the use of dialectic (9, p. 192a).
- (II) The “alliance of philosophy and theology”, by virtue of a quasi-parity where philosophy lent its *form* to theology and received a certain autonomy in return; this was made possible by the entry into the West of the entire Aristotelian *corpus*, which planted the “seed of a real intellectual revolution”. Opposing the “commonplace” that deplored the protracted submission of Western philosophy to the Aristotelian yoke, Cousin observes that in practice “Aristotle’s dominion was a powerful medium of progress for the human mind”. Albert, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus were the three thinkers who elevated the “theological form” to the highest degree, that is, “the only philosophy of that epoch”. Albert was “more physicist”, Thomas “more metaphysician and especially more moralist”, integrating morals and politics (Cousin mentions in particular his words against in defence of the Jews) with the *esprit philosophique* typical of him. As for Duns Scotus, he was above all “a dialectician and an analyst”, and he had the merit of having enriched philosophy with a precision which up until then had been unknown (9, p. 194b).
- (III) The “Beginning of a separation” which was gradually to lead to modern thought. The “war” between philosophical form and theological foundation, “which up until then had coexisted in perfect harmony”, broke out in the dispute between nominalists and realists, who in Scholasticism embodied the categories of sensualism and idealism. It was Ockham who revived this polemic, “destroying with his nominalism all the entities of Scholasticism” as well as “the theory of the sensible and intelligible species”; by this means, he “unconsciously revived Arcesilaus’ polemic against the Stoics”, thus becoming an antecedent of the Scottish school, while, by denying the possibility of grasping the nature of substances, he anticipated Locke’s position, whose groundlessness is immediately demonstrated by Cousin (9, p. 197ab).

More than a century of struggle between realists and nominalists, namely, between idealism and empiricism, led here too, to scepticism which, due to the limited independence granted the *esprit humain*, did not question the theological foundation and limited itself to destroying the *form* of Scholastic philosophy with an excess of controversies. At this point, it became impossible to avoid the establishment of mysticism, which the medieval spirit was perfectly aware of and which became predominant with Tauler, Petrarch, Thomas of Kempis, and with “our illustrious

Gerson” in particular. This French thinker was the first – with his *Theologia mystica* – to have a clear perception of his own speculative position, whereas the Indian author of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and then Plotinus and Proclus “consider themselves to be ordinary philosophers, while we have defined them as mystics” (9, p. 199b). Cousin dwells on Gerson’s thought, and finally points out that the historical path of Scholasticism (“the entire circle of its development”) brings to us the same results as Indian philosophy and Greek philosophy, although in more moderate terms.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries represent, “in the scope the general history of the human mind, a necessary transition” between Scholasticism and modern thought; they are characterised by a “spirit of adventure”, “overabundant energy”, and by their emancipation from theology which was not accompanied however by an appropriate method, so that “philosophy immerses itself at random into all the systems it meets”; it avoids the authority of the Church, moving (here is the transition) to the entirely human and much less durable authority of the newly rediscovered ancient philosophy, as a result of the fall of Constantinople and the ensuing transmission of the arts, literature, and philosophy of Greece to the West (10, pp. 201b–202b). In any case, for Cousin it is important to emphasize that the imitation of the Greek philosophical schools did not occur simultaneously but, despite the apparent confusion and “fervent yeast” that characterised this epoch, it took place according to the “regular laws of the development and progress of systems”. And indeed the fifteenth century was dominated by “idealistic Platonic dogmatism” and “sensualistic Peripatetic dogmatism”, while, for Cousin, scepticism dawned only towards the middle of the sixteenth century, with Montaigne, Charron, and Sánchez. As for mysticism, it appeared very soon, following the Platonism which had come from Byzantium, but this was an “almost sterile” revival of Alexandrian mysticism: something negligible if compared with the new and original mysticism which was later to establish itself with Paracelsus, Weigel, Cardano, Van Helmont, Fludd, and Boehme.

Marsilius Ficinus (who is also mentioned as the initiator of mysticism) was the “father” of Platonic idealism, which ended with Giordano Bruno, defined as a “Marsilius Ficinus raised to the utmost degree”, less erudite than the Florentine but “immensely more original, and also more reasonable”. Bruno was the “martyr of this school and, with his blood, planted in Europe the seed of an inevitable revolution. With all the due differences, he was the forerunner of Descartes”, because he brought idealism to the highest point of development it could attain in the sixteenth century, “before the real philosophical method was known” (10, p. 204a; the anticipation of some Cartesian themes in Bruno had already been noticed, for example, by Condillac: cf. *Models*, III, pp. 157). Another martyr of Platonic idealism and Protestantism was Petrus Ramus, who fell victim in Paris to the fanaticism of the nominalist Charpentier. This deplorable case (like that of the Aristotelian Sepúlveda, who supported the submission of American Indians to slavery) gives Cousin the opportunity to contest the accusation of backwardness that “modern sensualism” made against idealism: in fact, no system whatever can arrogate to itself the exclusive right to “be at the service of civilisation”, hence all systems deserve respect and tolerance as they are the “legitimate children of the human mind and human freedom” (10, p. 205a). Moving on to the Peripatetic school, which “is fundamentally

sensualistic", Cousin distinguishes between the "logical sensualism" of the Alexandrianists, led by Pomponazzi, and the pantheistically-oriented sensualism of the Averroists. But the sensualism of the Peripatetics (among whom he also includes Vanini, defending him against the accusation of atheism) had no definite features and was only distinguished by its "adventurous audacity". A new impulse came to it thanks to Telesio (who can be referred to Democritus) and Campanella, who in his plan for a universal reform of learning showed "more ardour than firmness, more extension than profundity"; despite their opposition to Aristotle, these two thinkers, "without being aware of it, still refer back to Peripateticism, in both principles and outcomes, because they are sensualists and empiricists"(10, pp. 208a-209a).

By presenting the four great philosophical schools of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Cousin confirms the validity of his interpretative scheme founded on the laws of the human mind. Consequently he now puts forward some considerations: first of all, after wondering which of these schools had the greatest number of followers and systems and better reflected the "general spirit" of these two centuries, he decides it was the mystical school, "in its twofold development, both allegorical and alchemic"; and it could not be otherwise, because in that period the human mind had freed itself from religious authority but not from its "ancient habits": hence the "mixture of heterodoxy and religious spirit" that characterises mysticism. Moreover, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries showed a re-emergence of "national individualities" in the philosophical field too. In general, Italy was the seat of Peripatetic and Platonic dogmatism, France of scepticism, and Germany of mysticism. Another criterion for elaborating a general evaluation is the means of expression because Cousin considers the use of the vernacular to indicate the presence of independent and original thought. From this point of view, a significant fact is that Peripatetics and Platonists (except for Bruno's Italian dialogues) always used Latin, whereas sceptics and mystics manifestly preferred the vernacular.

A final observation concerns the intrinsic value of the philosophy elaborated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In agreement with his historicist precepts, Cousin stresses the positive nature of the "immense path that free imitation of Antiquity opened up to the human mind", and the "fruitful yeast of so many and so different systems"; the negative aspect is the "immense confusion" engendered by the spirit of imitation and revealed by the absence of a method, which was the "fundamental vice" of philosophy in that epoch. What was lacking was a principle unifying the different parts of philosophy; what was lacking in particular was the capability to identify, hence to seek, the true "basis of the entire edifice". If we want to find a starting point that is common to all systems in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is to be found in ontology, "outside human nature, because the starting point is constituted by God or by external nature and the point of arrival to be attained in some way is man". It was necessary to carry out a "revolution" which reversed this tendency by introducing a rigorous method no longer linked to ontology but to psychology (10, p. 211ab).

The attributes of modern philosophy, which is marked by "progressive secularization", are therefore the independence of all authority (including that of the ancients) and the adoption of a method founded on the preliminary study of human nature and its faculties. The initiators of modern philosophy were Bacon and

Descartes, who had some things in common (they were both laymen, physicists, geometers and both experienced in human society) and some differences, giving rise to two schools, the sensualistic and the idealistic. On the basis of a maxim inspired by common sense (*tout commence toujours bien*), Cousin develops an interpretative scheme which centres on the distinction between “principles” and “consequences” and which had already been applied to the Plato and Aristotle: “at the start, the head of a school does not reach all the consequences of his principles; he exhausts his bravery in the very invention of principles, and in this way he largely avoids the strangeness of the consequences”. This was the case of Francis Bacon, who seems to be far removed from the results his school was to achieve later on. Indeed, he did not build a system but limited himself to defining a method, and in some passages of his *De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum* (quoted here in full) proved to be sensitive to the needs of the rational method and to questions which are proper to mysticism and even magic. But this receptiveness and moderation was subdued in Bacon himself by an “exclusive” sensualism that induced him to reject all inner analysis, which he compared to a slight spider’s web (II, pp. 213b–214a).

Cousin does not hesitate to speak of a “school of Bacon”, and even to mention his three “official successors”, who applied his *esprit* to the different parts of philosophy: Hobbes with reference to morals and politics, Gassendi to erudition, and Locke to “metaphysics”. He points out Hobbes’ rigorous consequentiality, which grants him “a higher status in the history of philosophy”; indeed, his politics resulted from morals, deriving in turn from his “general philosophy”, which was rooted in Bacon’s sensualism. Gassendi, on the other hand, together with Bérigard and Magnen, “profited from Antiquity in favour of sensualism”. Gassendi’s adherence to an Epicureanism that he claimed he could clear of its anti-Christian aspects – while “everything in Epicurus is sensualism, materialism, atheism” – is judged to be the product of incoherence or “ecclesiastical prudence”; yet, for Cousin, Gassendi’s thought did not reside in this but “in the passion with which he fought against Descartes’ dawning idealism” (II, p. 215b). As for Locke, his originality lay in the principle whereby it is necessary above all to know the human mind, since it is by means of this that we think and philosophise. In this way he “rendered an immortal service to the human mind”, except that, “after having opened up the path of true philosophy”, founded on psychological analysis, “he started himself to vacillate and, although unaware, got lost along a narrow and exclusive path”, considering sensation as the “root” of all our knowledge (II, p. 216b).

Like Bacon (Cousin is fond of symmetries), Descartes based himself on wise principles, “which are the soul of modern philosophy as a whole” but finally led to an “exclusive doctrine”. For this reason, in his metaphysics he reached a parallogism, “a serious mistake, an evident anachronism in the history of consciousness”: he viewed the existence of the world as the result of complex reasoning, based on the veracity of God, whereas this existence is known directly. Once the door had been thus opened to idealism, Spinoza and Malebranche became the “legitimate products of the master”. Indeed, once the notion of the external world and the very notion of man had been weakened (owing to the frequent confusion between “will”, which is active and free, and “desire”, which is passive and impersonal), the notion of God “ended up by absorbing the other two” and by presenting itself as the only

substance ("since a substance is that which – already in itself – possesses being, and the finite is that which participates of existence without possessing it already in itself, a finite substance implies two contradictory notions"). Hence, in Spinoza, there is a reduction of man and nature to pure phenomena. This results from the prevalence in the conception of God of the notion of "substance" over that of "cause": namely, a sort of slippage which was already visible in Descartes and which Spinoza "has turned into a system" by conceiving of man not as a "voluntary and free cause", hence as the fruit of a "productive and creative cause", but as a "powerless desire", a phenomenal expression of the "unmoved substance of the universe". As for Malebranche, he is defined as a "Christian Spinoza, a little more orthodox and less self-consistent". He added every idea we have (imperfect in itself) to the idea of God as a perfect being and "preserved the notion of cause in God, but degraded it in man", since he judged human freedom to be weak. The ultimate outcome of the theory of occasional causes appears therefore to be "the absorption of man in God" (II, pp. 217a–219a and 220ab).

In this framework, Cousin lays great emphasis on Leibniz, who is described as he who tried to oppose the "two extreme parties" of sensualism and idealism. As for Locke he raised the objection that the senses are not capable on their own of explaining "the order of ideas" and "the reason for phenomena". On the other hand, he rose up against the "suicide of freedom and humanity to the advantage of eternal substance", to which Spinoza's philosophy can finally be reduced, and was the first to denounce the "hidden vice of the Cartesian school as a whole", namely, the prevailing of the idea of substance over that of cause, stressing instead their mutual connection: "if a substance were not a cause, it would be a substance which does not develop nor manifest itself, therefore it would not admit any attribute distinct from itself either, and it would be nothing but an abstract substance, a scholastic entity. Hence, according to Leibniz, every real and not merely verbal substance is essentially endowed with energy, it is a force". This criticism is for Leibniz "one of the strongest reasons for pride"; it is precisely this reason, observes Cousin, which was recently highlighted by Maine de Biran in the *Examen des leçons de M. Laromiguière* and in the article on Leibniz in the *Biographie universelle* (12, pp. 220b–221a). There was therefore a considerable agreement between Cousin and the Leibnizian method, which is viewed as an antecedent of the eclectic method. Indeed, it is "both a theoretical and a historical method, whose pre-eminent feature is to reject nothing and include everything in order to make use of everything. This is the direction we are striving to follow and we will continue to recommend as the only true star illuminating the dark path of the history of philosophy". But in addition to a method, Leibniz also elaborated a system, of which we have only fragments and which is based on the doctrine of monads and pre-established harmony. Consequently, with the theory of the "simple correspondence" between the monad of the soul and the monads constituting the body, there follows the negation of mutual action between soul and body, which means "denying an evident fact" and "reducing the soul to pure consciousness": a clearly idealistic result (12, p. 221ab).

Far from being defeated by the "hypothesis" of pre-established harmony (thus confirming the "general rule" according to which "an exaggeration must not be corrected with another exaggeration"), Locke's followers (Collins, Dodwell, and

Mandeville) were induced to “push their principles to the most deplorable extremes”, provoking the reaction of several thinkers, from Newton and Samuel Clarke, Shaftesbury and Berkeley. Similar contrasts took place in France, Germany, and Italy, where Fardella and Vico’s idealism represented an opposing force to counter-balance Genovesi’s sensualism. But by the seventeenth century, as a reaction to the “eccentricities” of the two dogmatisms, a particularly audacious scepticism appeared, fostered by the spirit of freedom and criticism. Cousin distinguishes between “false sceptics”, driven by the apologetic religious intention to “bring the human mind back to the sense of its weakness”, and “true sceptics”. The former include La Mothe le Vayer, Huet, Hieronymus Hirnhaim, and above all Pascal, whose originality lay in perceiving genuinely and earnestly the uncertainty of all opinions and the fear of death, to which he reacted “by throwing himself into the arms of absolutely orthodox faith”. This coexistence of sceptical reason and the need to believe gave rise, in Pascal, to “an anxious scepticism and a dogmatism not devoid of anxieties”, which, passing through the filter of his melancholic temperament and geometrical spirit, turned into a “style of unequalled nature and superior beauty”. True sceptics originated instead from Gassendi’s learned empiricism: Sorbière, abbé Foucher, and above all Bayle, who is defined as “more paradoxical than sceptical, and a scholar rather than a thinker”. The Englishman Joseph Glanvill, on the other hand, was a “systematic” sceptic who came from the school of Bacon, because his criticism of the idea of cause represented the “direct antecedent” of Hume (12, p. 224ab).

But a sort of mechanism recommenced by which “scepticism, unable to destroy the need to believe which is innate in the human soul, forces dogmatism to envelop itself in the new form of mysticism”, according to its triple orientation (physical-naturalistic, moral-metaphysical, and allegorical-symbolic). During the first part of the modern age, several mystics emerged: from the Dutchman Mercurius Van Helmont to the Englishman Theophile Gale and the Frenchman Pierre Poiret, up to the Swede Swedenborg, who brought to a close the mysticism typical of the seventeenth century. Indeed, the “theatre of philosophy”, which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had been restricted to Italy, now extends to the whole of Europe. “If philosophy had remained in Italy”, wonders Cousin emphatically, “where would it be stuck now? But, thank God, in the seventeenth century it descended from the resourceful and miserable Italy into these strong and productive countries belonging forever to European civilisation, England, Germany, and France, where it secured itself, so to speak, the immense future promised to it by its very inner constitution” (12, p. 227b).

We have now reached the central “core” of Cousin’s work: the history of philosophy in Europe in the eighteenth century, which is seen as the accomplishment and climax of the entire progress of thought through the different epochs and the various systems following on from one another. At this point, even the most inattentive student must have seen the internal structure of eighteenth-century philosophy as obvious and evident. But the fourfold scheme is put forward here not too rigidly, trying to take into account the variety and complexity of human thought, as well as the dialectic relationship which existed by then between Europe as a philosophical whole and the individual nations comprising it. Indeed, eighteenth-century

“philosophical Europe [...] contains all systems, [but] none of them predominates”; on the contrary, “if the general philosophy of Europe, which we must always bear in mind, includes all the different systems predominating in the different countries of Europe, then each of these countries – which represent only a particularity with respect to European unity – if considered in themselves also constitute a unity; and this particular unity, however poor and fruitless, [...] while dominated by this or that particular system, still presents all the other systems, which are certainly eclipsed but not destroyed by the presence of the winning element; for this reason, the philosophy elaborated in the different countries of Europe is itself a complete philosophy furnished with its four separate elements, among which there is one that predominates” (13, p. 230b).

Here we have a picture of eighteenth-century European philosophy, that is to say, the three nations which, in the eyes of Cousin, represent Europe. In France, from the middle of the century onwards, sensualism prevailed alongside the establishment of the physical sciences, but “Descartes and Malebranche’s ancient spiritualism” (this term appears for the first time here, replacing the usual “idealism”) is represented, for example, by the abbé de Lignac; spiritualism is associated with Rousseau’s most mature works (which defend “the ideal beautiful, disinterested virtue, the moral of conscience”, themes important to Cousin), as well as Turgot’s encyclopaedic article *Existence*. As for Voltaire, he is undoubtedly related to Locke’s sensualism, but does not get to the point of Helvétius and d’Holbach’s “eccentricities”; but rather, laughing at all systems, he expresses “scepticism in its more brilliant and lightest livery”. Mysticism is instead represented by the “profound and eloquent” Saint-Martin (13, pp. 230b–231a).

Similarly, in England, Price’s idealism adds to the prevailing sensualism, from Hartley to Bentham, while all three Scottish universities “belong more or less to the great spiritualistic school”. On the sceptic front, Hume by himself has the weight of a whole school, while mysticism has spread thanks to the Methodists and the school founded in London by Swedenborg. In Germany, on the other hand, idealism predominates: “I believe”, observes Cousin, “that in no epoch in the history of philosophy has there ever existed in a single nation, and in such a short time span, a more original and extended idealist movement as that which began in Königsberg in 1781 with the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and which lasts up to the present day, giving rise to an uninterrupted series of high-minded men, whose names are beginning to cross the borders of their motherland” (note that Cousin takes care not to mention these names...). The supremacy of idealism, however, has not removed the other philosophical tendencies: on the sensualistic front, Kant has been strongly opposed by Feder, Tittel, Weisshaupt, Tiedemann, and Herder; Schulze has taken up scepticism again, whereas Jacobi has developed Hume’s scepticism in a mystical direction, “thus paving the way for the multitude of famous mystics” who have appeared in Germany in recent times (13, pp. 231b–232a).

Moving on from geography to chronology, we see the reappearance of the “constant order”, or rather the “law” which governs the “development of systems through the whole history of philosophy” and seems to be the philosophical translation of

Judeo-Christian providentialism.³³ Sensualism, which in the seventeenth century was a minor tendency, became predominant in the eighteenth century thanks to the “ingenious and profound, albeit chimerical and eccentric, hypotheses” of Cartesian idealism, and “around 1750, Locke was the philosopher of enlightened Europe”. This predominance was opposed by the “new idealism” of the eighteenth century, from Rousseau (who fought against the Encyclopaedists) to Reid (who “was a mere antagonist of Locke”) and Kant, who is defined as “Reid on a large scale” (later on Cousin informs his students, who still know nothing about Kant, that “Scottish philosophy will prepare you for German philosophy” and specifies that his criticism of Locke’s positions is derived to a great extent from Reid and Kant: 15, p. 348b; as for Cousin’s attitude towards Kant, cf. Ragghianti, pp. 45–51). Hume is also regarded as “the outcome of the struggle between Locke’s sensualistic system and Berkeley’s idealistic system”, just as Schulze and Jacobi “are incomprehensible [...] without Condillac and Kant because their scepticism affects both at the same time”; Saint-Martin’s mysticism cannot be understood without Voltaire and Condillac, just as Friedrich Schlegel and Baader are “children of a disenchanted (*blasé*) time with respect to speculation, the last products of a discouraged philosophy abjuring itself” and offer as an extreme refuge either the mysticism of the Christian tradition or a “heterodox, arbitrary, and chimerical mysticism” (13, p. 233b).

There is a further longer description of the sensualist school the ‘Quatorzième leçon’, serving as an introduction to the critical analysis of Locke, which takes up the remaining part of this *Cours de philosophie* (lesson 15 provides a biographical profile of the English philosopher and lessons 16–26 analyse and discuss the four books of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*). But let us conclude this survey of Cousin’s historiographical theories, centred on the scheme of the four philosophical schools, by recalling, as Cousin himself explains, the theoretical perspective underlying his view of the history of philosophy: “Undeniably there exists a foundation of truth beneath the innumerable and contradictory mistakes contained in the four fundamental systems of philosophy, and if this foundation did not exist these very mistakes would be impossible. But mistakes are various and contradictory: the truth is one. These four systems, which greatly differ from one another in their mistakes, can and must agree as for the truths they contain. It follows that beneath the differences and the mistakes of systems destroying one another, there exists a harmonious set of truths which do not vanish, and that the history of philosophy contains a true philosophy and, in Leibniz’ words, a *perennis philosophia*, an immortal philosophy which remains hidden and is not lost through the eccentric developments of systems. This is the common foundation upon which we all live, people and philosophers: we live, so to speak, in truth and on truth, and in order to attain true philosophy it is enough to free this immortal basis from the defective and changeable forms which eclipse it and at the same time reveal it in history” (13, p. 234b).

³³ “[...] remarquez, messieurs”, observes Cousin a few lines below, “comme l’histoire est bien faite, comme l’esprit qui y préside fait toute chose dans son temps avec poids et mesure, et fait arriver les systèmes quand il est bon qu’ils arrivent” (*Cours II*, 13, p. 233b).

5.1.4.4 Cousin develops a number of reflections on the methodology, which is directly related to his theoretical premises. He does not accept that his method is “hypothetical” and (just like Degérando) refers explicitly to Bacon in order to point out the “rational” as well as the “experimental” nature of his historiographical method. Since it is rational, the method “consists in moving from the human mind, which is the matter and the subject of history, to history [itself], which is the manifestation of the human mind”. The experimental method in turn consists in “investigating history just as we have done with the human mind”, examining *all* epochs and *all* systems. The conclusion of this enquiry becomes evident now: “history in its entirety finally comes to resolve itself, during each of its epochs, within the same framework already put forward by the human mind. The final outcome of the experiences of history is the constant reappearance, during each great epoch, of four systems which are profoundly connected without becoming indistinct and which develop harmoniously while definitely progressing”; the steady way in which this phenomenon has recurred allows us to speak of a “law of history” (*Cours II*, 13, p. 229a; a closer examination of the historical and the speculative method, the “alliance” of which leads us to acknowledge “the identity of philosophy and the history of philosophy”, is contained in *Cours I*, 4, pp. 103–104).

But are there any specific methodological guidelines within these general coordinates? When dealing with more recent philosophy, Cousin mentions the traditional “ethnographic method”, which presents the philosophers on the basis of the nation they belong to, but this method (which Cousin himself had previously applied) is not conclusive because it is arbitrary, anti-historical, and anti-scientific. The least arbitrary method is certainly that based on chronological order, integrated and enriched with the criterion of the “reciprocal dependence of systems”, which within modern Europe interact with one another far beyond national boundaries. “The task of the historian is to reproduce this movement and this chain of connections”, therefore. Echoing a famous page from the *Poetics*, Cousin observes that “in the drama of eighteenth-century European philosophy, the unity of place is unimportant; we have to keep to the unity of action”. Finally, systems must be examined “according to the order of analogy between them, with reference to the subjects they deal with”, thus avoiding mixing “metaphysicians and political commentators, moralists and physicists, historians and critics and grammarians”. These three standpoints (the chronological, the “historical”, and the “scientific”) are all equally necessary, because they are nothing but “different parts of one single order, which is the true order, that is, the philosophical spirit applied to history” (*Cours II*, 14, pp. 238b–239a and 240b).

We may ask here what role is granted to erudition and philology. It is a rather modest one in the case of modern, but also medieval, thought (“We all come from the Middle Ages”, observes Cousin, thus reflecting the romantic climate, “and we can realize this almost effortlessly”). Quite different is classical Antiquity, which represents “the real stage on which the historian of philosophy operates, the true battlefield of erudition and criticism”. This civilisation, with its cults, arts, and governments is distant and different from us; the disappearance of such a considerable part of its literature and the regrettable state of the little that has come down to us,

together with the “difficulty of their language and profound difference of their ideas”, oblige the historian to face “obstacles he can overcome only with the help of tireless patience, the most meticulous erudition, the most cautious criticism, and an extremely penetrating and at the same time flexible intelligence”. Not by chance the greatest historians of philosophy (Brucker, Tiedemann, and Tennemann) started by studying ancient philosophy. Here Cousin is peremptory: “Anyone who is not trained in this field and has not lived at length in classical Antiquity, among manuscripts and texts, and also in the midst of philological disputes, will never acquire a sense of criticism and will never be able to write a general history of philosophy with a full knowledge of the subject” (*Cours I*, 13, pp. 340–341).

As frequently happens, this strong methodological awareness is accompanied by a considerably less attentive historiographical practice, which seems to be more interested in impressing the audience in the game of the “four schools” than in providing systematic information based on a precise and rigorous use of the sources.³⁴ Unlike Hegel’s extremely sedate *Vorlesungen*, Cousin’s *Leçons* bring a persuasive and stimulating oratorical style into the often arid territory of the historiography of philosophy. The *Cours de philosophie* is far removed from the well-established models of the general history of philosophy, and the comprehensive – but undoubtedly unexciting – works by authors like Tennemann or Degérando are replaced by fascinating overviews, repeated theoretical digressions, and an analytical and critical approach based on individual authors, even though Degérando had distinguished himself for his conversational and flowing style. Cousin in fact seems to disdain the well-ordered style typical of the text book and prefers audacious epochal syntheses, brilliant intuitions, and schematic descriptions of schools and thinkers, reserving for another place – the “*fragments*” *philosophiques* in particular – the more detailed analysis of a philological and erudite nature, which, however, he was particularly fond of: a clear and deliberate gap therefore separates erudition on the history of philosophy and the “philosophical” history of philosophy, significantly analogous to what was later to characterise the production of a writer like Benedetto Croce in Italy, for example.

5.1.5 Imitated and flattered by a host of secondary-school teachers and students, criticized and vituperated by adversaries both on a philosophical and an ideological plane, Cousin’s eclecticism became a phenomenon with its own cultural and politi-

³⁴ It is to be noted, however, that in the treatments of Plato, Aristotle, the post-Aristotelian schools, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, sixteenth-century writers like Pomponazzi and Telesio, there are frequent quotations from their works in footnotes. As for Strato, Cousin mentions an unpublished commentary on *Phaedo* written by Olympiodorus, which is preserved in the “Bibliothèque du Roi”, the present *Bibl. Nationale* (*Cours II*, 8, p. 177ab). As for the modern philosophers, Cousin limits himself to providing their dates of birth and death and the titles of their major works in the footnotes. Let us also point out some more or less notable mistakes, such as “Jean [*sic*] d’Occam”, the fact that Averroes is situated in the eighth century, the attribution of Jacopo Zabarella, Francesco Piccolomini, and Cesare Cremonini to the “school of Bologna” instead of Padua, and the statement that Fardella was active in Venice and died in Padua (9, p. 196b; 10, pp. 206b and 207ab; 12, p. 222a).

cal weight, extending to moral custom and considered a negative symbol. “ÉCLECTISME: Tonner contre, comme étant une philosophie immorale”: Flaubert used these words in the slim *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* added to *Bouvard et Pécuchet* to ironically stigmatize the system elaborated by the man who for so many years had dominated French philosophical establishment (G. Flaubert, *Oeuvres* (Paris, 1959–1962), II, p. 1007). But by 1849 Ferrari had defined eclecticism as a “Scholasticism without principles” and observed that, by granting the history of philosophy primary importance, Cousin had “weakened minds” and become the “master of a nerveless generation” (*Les philosophes salariés*, p. 158). However, in reconstructing Cousin’s (mis)fortune, we must take into consideration chronology and geography so that the hardly flattering image of the “pope of official philosophy” (to use Ferrari’s words again) does not become pervasive and all-inclusive. On a chronological level, we must distinguish at least between a “first” and a “second” Cousin. The advent of the Orleanist monarchy meant the rapid transition (or rather regression) of eclecticism from a philosophical and political manifesto at the cutting edge of liberal opposition to a State philosophy. In the 15 years which elapsed between the beginning of his university teaching and the July revolution (more particularly during the dynamic years that followed his imprisonment in Germany, when he produced his most significant works), with his eclectic project, Cousin was active in favour of a philosophical as well as political renewal, and this took place thanks to a successful combination of patriotism, liberalism, and “popularity of history”, which transformed his philosophical system into a political party (Taine, pp. 301–304). In this way he created a central role for the history of philosophy, which it had never enjoyed before in the French cultural tradition. It was not by chance that the Saint-Simonian Laurent devoted his *Résumé de l’histoire de la philosophie* (but we are still in 1826...) precisely to Cousin (see above, p. 351).

This sense of the novelty and broadmindedness of eclecticism manifests itself, for example, in an article on Cousin’s translation of Plato which appeared in *Le Constitutionnel* of 30th October, 1827 and was attributed to Stendhal (whose philosophical education – furthermore – had the imprint of *idéologie*). Why, asks the author of the article, is Plato so successful today, despite the huge time span separating us from him? Because his philosophy manifests the same “double character” as the philosophy that prevails in the nineteenth century: a spiritualistic philosophy, which tends, nevertheless, to go beyond that perpetual struggle and alternation between spiritualism and materialism which is revealed to us by the “history of human opinions”; so we see, on the one hand, that “the infancy of the human species has fallen prey to exclusive doctrines”, but its maturity will be distinguished by eclecticism, which aims at reconciliation and is a “legitimate child of the *Lumières*”. Just like Plato and the nineteenth century, Cousin harbours in his mind “two spirits”, since he is “a spiritualist in his heart and an eclectic with respect to reason: as a spiritualist, he is merely the head of a faction in the philosophical republic; as an eclectic, he rises above all parties [...] and occupies an exclusive place among those superior spirits who – high above the fanatical emblems of schools and sects – unfurl with a smile the broad flag of common sense and science” (Stendhal,

Mélanges de littérature (Paris, 1933), III, pp. 230 and 234–236; see also the article by Stendhal in the September 1828 edition of the *New Monthly Magazine*). On the contrary a few years later (1835), in *Lucien Leuwen*, Stendhal made a sarcastic aside about Cousin, defining him as “a liberal in 1829, full of sublime and touching thoughts, who today gathers positions worth forty thousand francs and calls the republicans ‘the abomination of mankind’”... (Stendhal, *Lucien Leuwen* (Paris, 1929), p. 14).

If we want to consider the reception of Cousin from a geographical point of view, we must take into account the different national and cultural areas. In Italy, the impact of eclecticism was less predominant than in France, since it did not enjoy the status of an official philosophy; nevertheless, until the middle of the century, it continued to have a wide and profound influence, and then persisted for a long time, albeit concealed and contaminated in various ways, in the works on the history of philosophy rather than in those of a strictly philosophical nature.³⁵ The criticisms formulated by Gioberti and Rosmini (also concerning questions pertaining to the history of philosophy)³⁶ were paralleled, for example, by Poli’s attempt to shape an entirely Italian eclecticism (see below, p. 486). Thanks to its ability to create a

³⁵ See, for example, Felice Tocco’s review of the *Abbozzo di una storia filosofica della filosofia* (Foligno, 1889) by Pietro De Nardi, where it is pointed out that in order to “establish the law governing the development of philosophical thought”, the author “draws on Cousin, although he does not mention him” (*Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 7 (1894), pp. 120–121; on De Nardi (see below, p. 486)).

³⁶ Gioberti, for example, disputes the “paradox” (maintained by Hegel and “transplanted into France” by Cousin) that “excludes the history of religions from the history of philosophy”, while ancient European and Oriental religions “are to a great extent philosophical systems conflicting with the most modern theories, not with reference to substance but only to form”. Moreover, he rejects the alleged supremacy of France (in particular in the field of philosophy) over the other nations of Southern Europe. Against Cousin, he reaffirms the pantheism and materialism of Spinozism; he defines Descartes’ “psychologism”, which Cousin had instead exalted, as a “modern heterodoxy”; he claims that Anselm – and hence Italy – was the author of the Cartesian proof of the existence of God; he reproaches Cousin for not knowing Malebranche’s system, unjustifiably associated with that of Spinoza (V. Gioberti, *Introduzione allo studio della filosofia*, ed. by G. Calò (Milan, 1939–1941), I, pp. 4, 196, 209, and 225–228; II, pp. 270, 274, 303, and 310–313). Cousin himself is defined as “an elegant and at times eloquent dictating author and one of the major French writers as to copiousness, splendour, vivacity, fluency, and soundness of style, but not a philosopher”; indeed, “when he enters the circle of ideas, since the doctrines he explains are not his own but are drawn from other writers, he handles them in the fashion of a rhetor, so as to endow them with a beautiful form, rather than in the fashion of a philosopher, so as to possess their intrinsic truth and convey it to others” (*ibid.*, II, p. 113; cf. Piovani, *Indagini di storia della filosofia*, pp. 446–447). As for Rosmini, in addition to the theoretical criticisms he raises in his *Lettera sull’eclettismo* in particular (A. Rosmini, *Introduzione alla filosofia*, ed. by U. Redanò (Rome, 1935), pp. 367–387; see also below, pp. 359–363), we can note an opinion on Cousin he formulates in his *Saggio sulla divina Provvidenza* (1826): “A lively and uncommon mind [...] a meritorious translator of Plato and Proclus [...] we cannot refrain from observing how wrongly he confuses the Platonic system with the Christian system with reference to truth” (G. Radice, *Annali di Antonio Rosmini Serbati*, III: 1823–1828 (Milan, 1970), p. 431; but see also on p. 632 a passage from a letter Rosmini wrote in Rome to Giacomo Mellerio on 13th December 1828: “Should Manzoni have sent you Cousin’s lessons, please hand them to [Giuseppe] Pogliani”).

synthesis, eclecticism served to spread typical aspects of European culture to Italy, from Romanticism to German Idealism, while the political significance Cousin had given his philosophy provided an ideological basis for liberal Catholicism, from Vieusseux to Manzoni. Eclecticism was particularly widespread in Naples, where it served as a vehicle for the subsequent rise of Hegelianism. Nor should we forget that “Cousin’s historicism, which added science to the path followed by man in his search for truth, contributed to creating a more profound link not only with Vico, but also with Genovesi, Galiani, Cuoco, and the whole reformist movement which had brought honour to Southern Italy during the second half of the eighteenth century” (Mastellone, *V. Cousin e il Risorgimento italiano*, p. 212; see also pp. 15–17, concerning the reasons why Cousin’s influence in Italy was soon underestimated or denied; on the reception of the *Cours de philosophie* in England, see below, pp. 537–538, 562–564, 574–578, 601).

The situation was different, or indeed opposite, in Germany because Germany was central in the creation of works on the history of philosophy, and it was through his relationship with Hegel that Cousin developed his fundamental historical view. In reality, there was a certain ambiguity to this relationship because the rapid publication and diffusion of Cousin’s lessons on the history of philosophy in Europe (resulting, at least in part, from his use of the notes on Hegel’s lessons taken by Heinrich Gustav Hotho) would seem to have something unclear about it if we consider that Hegel’s *Vorlesungen* were only to appear posthumously, in the years 1833–1836.³⁷ In this regard, Hegel himself seems to have reacted with irritation when – presumably in the summer of 1828 – he learned about the content of the course held by his French friend in the previous months: “Cousin has caught some of my fish, poaching it copiously in his sauce” (Becchi, *Hegel e Cousin*, p. 232). It was an “eclectic sauce” that Hegel did not approve of, as is shown by the fact that when he illustrates his notion of “concreteness” in the *Einleitung*, he distances himself from eclecticism with a touch of sarcasm.³⁸

The attention of scholars soon turned to Hegel’s influence on Cousin, giving rise to a specific critical literature of which we limit ourselves here to a few examples: three particularly significant positions based on clear philosophical backgrounds. The first comes from the long review of the *Fragments philosophiques* and the *Cours de philosophie* which appeared in 1831 in the supplements to the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* and were written by Friedrich Eduard Beneke, who, as it is known, did not find favour with Hegel because he was an exponent of the psychologistic reaction to speculative idealism. Beneke presents and discusses Cousin’s thought in its entirety, from the theory of knowledge to the history of philosophy. Concerning the history of philosophy he points out, among other things, the rigidity and

³⁷ However, on the fact that Cousin was “right, at least formally,” in entirely omitting to mention his debt to Hegel’s lessons, see C. Cesa, *Studi sulla sinistra hegeliana* (Urbino, 1972), p. 82.

³⁸ Hegel, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by J. Hoffmeister, 3rd ed. (Hamburg, 1959), p. 130: “Diese Konkrete ist von dem Eklektischen zu unterscheiden, d.i. von dem bloßen Zusammensetzen verschiedener Prinzipien, Meinungen, gleichsam verschiedener Lappen zu einem Kleid”.

inappropriateness of the fourfold scheme (from a certain point of view, for example, the “sensualist” Locke is also an “idealist”, and Condillac even more so, because extension could be understood as merely a “form” of the human faculty of representation; how is it possible, moreover, to place Kant among the “idealists” as he rejects innate ideas?: ALZ/Erg., n. 98, 1831, col. 779). As for the sources that inspired Cousin, Beneke mentions above all Scottish philosophy, through Royer-Collard; then Kant, whose influence is considered noteworthy, although it remains unclear how Cousin became initially interested in this philosopher; then there is Plato and the Neoplatonists, who made Cousin “receptive to Schelling and Hegel’s positions”, but Beneke makes it clear that in France and England the influence of these two philosophers on Cousin has been quite overestimated.³⁹

The second position is that of an early-twentieth-century Italian philosopher, the sceptic Giuseppe Rensi, who, quite resolutely and mockingly, observed that “when one dares to bring Cousin close to Hegel, the Hegelians see red and become livid with superior disdain for one who is unable to distinguish between the superficial stitching together carried out by Cousin and Hegel’s deep systematic understanding of the moment of truth of every system. Let us concede that one may believe that Cousin watered down and sugared Hegel’s hard and obscure concepts in small pills, so as to make them digestible to the Parisian salons; the fact remains that his eclecticism is Hegelianism and that Hegelianism in the field of the history of philosophy is nothing but Cousin’s eclecticism, albeit redeemed from transcendentalism and dressed up with Sinaitic phrases and gestures”. Then even more negative remarks are added, giving Cousin the involuntarily and therapeutic function of demystifying: “One may perhaps affirm that Cousin is Hegel’s caricature. But a caricature is a reproduction of the original, whose defects it merely emphasizes. Cousin is Hegel revealed, Hegel without the pleated garments which mask his distortions and humps. Hence, reading Cousin cures us of Hegel, because, when we remove Hegel’s obscurity, which had seemed to conceal impenetrable and vague depths, and when, in Cousin, Hegel’s thought becomes superficially clear, then we also see the commonplaces, the cheap tricks, and the artificiality of that which constitutes pure Hegelian thought” (Rensi, *Lineamenti di filosofia scettica*, pp. 225 and 229; but see also p. 234, where, after dwelling on the “identity of spirit and history in Cousin”, Rensi observes ironically that this sort of “Hegelianism is of course *débonnaire*, it wears a dressing gown, is a slipshod fellow, a good boy, and we would almost say a little *Tarasconnais* because it relates to God, the world, and to human affairs from the point of view of the same simple, clear, and irresponsible confidence as that with which Tartarin contemplated the alpine glaciers. But, nevertheless, it remains Hegelianism in its intrinsic conception and essential movement”).

However, apart from a number of fundamental ideas in common, there persists a radical difference between Cousin’s eclecticism and Hegel’s synthesis of contraries. As Gueroult clearly explained – and this is our third position – “Hegel’s concern is

³⁹ALZ/Erg., n. 94, Oct. 1831, col. 748. On Beneke’s attitude to Cousin and, more in general, on Cousin’s relations with the German philosophers, cf. Ragghianti, pp. 85–110.

not to choose and eliminate, but rather to preserve everything that concerns antithetical terms, organizing them according to a higher combination. Cousin replaces this process with reconciliation by sub-contraries, according to the rule of the elimination of contraries disdained by Hegel"; it follows that "synthesis, instead of replacing by looking beyond the terms, takes place thanks to a regression, through a mutual impoverishment". Indeed, according to Cousin (Gueroult is here referring to the prefaces to the *Fragments philosophiques*), the reconciliation of two opposite systems does not take place in a higher synthesis which contains both of them again, but occurs through the "decomposition" of each system into two parts, one true and the other false, and the ensuing elimination of the latter, in such a way that a truth is added to another truth. Both Hegel and Cousin regarded their systems as the accomplishment of history; yet, for Hegel this accomplishment consists in elaborating an "original doctrine that surpasses all other doctrines, absorbing them in itself", whereas for Cousin it is no longer possible to produce an original system, but we have to limit ourselves to combining the systems which have already been produced throughout history. In conclusion, "the accomplishment of the history of philosophy, which in Hegel corresponded to the constructive power capable of surpassing everything, in Cousin rests on the negation of such a power" (Gueroult, pp. 732–733).

These observations by Gueroult are remarkable for their subtlety and perceptiveness, although Renzi's provocative ironical judgements hit the mark if viewed in the context of his polemic against Hegelianism (and Neohegelianism). But the relationship between Cousin and Hegelianism should not be viewed in only one direction: besides the fact that the intellectual exchange took place on different planes (Cousin provided Hegel with updated information on the Revolution and the French political situation, whereas Hegel, both personally and through the "written notes" of his lessons, lectured the young French professor on the history of philosophy), we should not forget, for example, that the edition of Descartes' works prepared by Cousin aroused lively interest in Germany in the link between Cartesianism and idealism (of central importance for the interpretation of modern philosophy) and that one of Hegel's students, Hotho mentioned above, was able to discuss with Cousin his dissertation on Cartesian philosophy, which appeared in 1826 (Bertolino, *L'arte e la vita*, pp. 31–35).

But let us return to France, to Cousin's contemporaries Sainte-Beuve and Taine, who formulated a great variety of personal and intellectual opinions on him. In the writings of Sainte-Beuve, an extraordinary literary journalist, there are several references to Cousin. Apart from some remarks about his temperament ("Cousin reveals the attitudes of a mimic, an actor") and his rhetorical skills ("He does not like to speak for less than six quarters of an hour. During the first half hour he is pitiful [...]. During the second he often becomes admirable. During the third he is almost always unbearable"), of interest here are the opinions on Cousin as a thinker and a historian of philosophy which were to be taken up again by many later writers. "Cousin is not a true philosopher", observed Sainte-Beuve in a 'Parisian Chronicle' of 1843, "just as Guizot is no great historian; they are two huge *professors*, one of history, the other of philosophy. And more properly, if we remove the trappings and the prestige of the modern genius, Cousin would look like a *sophist*, the most

eloquent of *sophists*, in the most ancient and most favourable sense of this word [...]” (Sainte-Beuve, pp. 335 and 349, italics in the original text). Subsequently (in 1857), when considering Taine’s portrait of Cousin, Sainte-Beuve shifts the focus of attention from the strictly speculative plane and recognises that the true merit of this highly controversial and criticised thinker consisted in having promoted the study of the history of philosophy along different paths. He therefore observes that, “from whatever point of view we judge him, we may say that Mr. Cousin, by virtue of his eloquent and clear discourses, the publications he has produced with utmost diligence or has unceasingly caused even by those who are not of his school, and finally the impulse he has exerted, in his long career has rendered the most outstanding service to the history of philosophy, to that which is most durable in this or that particular philosophy. Whether he was an inventor or not in philosophy, he is at least its great librarian” (*Causeries du lundi*, XIII, p. 283).

Sainte-Beuve was referring here to the long critical description of Taine had developed of Cousin in his volume on the French spiritualist and eclectic philosophers of the first half of the nineteenth century which had appeared in 1857. In this volume, five out of twelve chapters are devoted to Cousin; in them Cousin is described as a writer, as a historian and biographer, as a philosopher, as the author of a “theory of reason”, and finally as a scholar and philologist. It is a comprehensive description which clearly alludes to the limits of the man who had dominated the French philosophical scene for many years. We read about “the wavering progression of his spirit”, which made him move from his initial adherence to Laromiguière’s “prudent analyses” to the Scottish thinkers and Royer-Collard, who soon revealed himself to be “dry and limited”; he therefore turned to the “dark mine” that was Kant, who was a “profound, but distasteful and scholarly” author and, as a result and by contrast, turned to Plato’s “divine style, vivacity, and enthusiasm”. But the Platonic dialogues were like “a preamble rather than a journey” and the *Parmenides* was barely comprehensible, so Cousin “launched into Proclus’ prodigious universe, a mosaic of triads”. Still not content, he then restored Descartes and exalted him as a “national glory”; but it was necessary to find “something more modern and attractive”, which he discovered in Schelling and Hegel: “from one he borrowed the finite, the infinite, and their relationship, from the other a philosophy of history and a history of philosophy, and it was in this way that the inspired lectures of 1828 appeared”. Skilfully taking advantage of the interest in history which characterized the nineteenth century, Cousin thus linked his own philosophy to the history of philosophy, and so acquired some merits there which, however, he unjustly took advantage of: he used the “precise facts” of the history of philosophy to lend authority to the “vague theories” of his philosophy, so much so that in him “the philosopher appropriated the esteem deserved by the historian” (Taine, pp. 303–305).

In conclusion, according to Taine as well, Cousin is an orator, not a philosopher, because, as Socrates had taught Polus, “eloquence is not dialectics, and the art of persuading the audience with a clever choice of plausible reasonings is not the art of creating precise analysis and rigorous syllogisms”. And he was an orator who, considering erudite refinement to be an end in itself (Taine is referring here to the

biographies of important seventeenth-century figures), owing to his philosophy of the “middle truths” and the perfection of his style, he should have lived in the middle of the *âge classique*, in 1640, because “he is a child of the seventeenth century who has become lost in another century” (Taine, pp. 100 and 198–199; Ravaisson in turn defined Cousin as “an orator who, Aristotle explains, as orators usually do, contented himself with credible facts when truth was lacking”: Ravaisson, p. 84; see also pp. 71–72, where it is observed that the eclectic project proclaimed by Cousin was reduced to “a brilliant evolution of semi-spiritualism” launched in France by Royer-Collard and based on Scottish philosophy and some ideas by Maine de Biran and Ampère).

When Taine was writing these judgements, Cousin was still alive and fully active on the French cultural scene. A more professional and detached judgement was to be expressed, 30 years later, by Ferraz, who toned down the more critical and polemical tones in Cousin’s historicization. After pointing out the fundamental role that the history of philosophy plays in Cousin’s eclecticism, together with psychology, Ferraz observes that some of his views are common to Hegel, whereas some others are original, but “they are all imbued with the spirit of the nineteenth century” and bear its mark, namely, the idea that the history of philosophy represents “the last word and the supreme application of the history of humanity”. As for the famous scheme of classification, Ferraz reproaches Cousin for having placed all four systems on the same level (as a result of the “immoderate optimism he derived from Hegel”), because scepticism and mysticism are mere “accidents in the history of thought”; “rationalism” (which is “the true name for idealism”) is truer than sensualism because it subordinates the lower part of man to the superior part of him. Finally, we must note that Ferraz appreciated some particular research into the history of ancient, medieval, and modern philosophy contained in the *Fragments* (Ferraz, pp. 262 and 267–270).

We can now come to a final synthesis which can also serve as a critical evaluation. After recognizing some important debts Cousin had to Degérando and Tennemann in particular but also to Hegel’s philosophy of history and culture, we can view Cousin’s perspective on the history of philosophy in its specific features, which are the result of an eclecticism which cannot be reduced, as has frequently been the case, to a makeshift solution due to an alleged lack of speculative substance. Indeed, the original character of this perspective arises precisely from his real or supposed ability (which for Cousin is a real historical “necessity”) to unite elements which have different origins so as to make them into a whole which is *something other than* the sum of its separate parts. Indeed, Cousin outlined his historiographical categories by merging the epistemological framework of the Scottish school and Kant’s psychologistic interpretation into his classificatory scheme, going back to the Cartesian tradition at the same time, referring to Leibniz as an incomparable model of “intelligence” and “learning” (*Cours I*, 4, p. 94), and projecting all this onto the background of a progressive conception of history inspired by Hegelianism and characterised by an even closer connection between philosophy and politics, that is, between theory and praxis.

The undisputed success of Cousin's eclecticism in France and Italy proves that it met the demand for a philosophical as well as political synthesis. The aspect we must emphasise here is that, in this synthesis, an essential role was played by the history of philosophy, to an even greater extent than in the Hegelian perspective, where the historical dimension ends up by being incorporated and dispersed into a great speculative apparatus, whereas in Cousin the theoretical reflection has a vague function as a support and subsidiary. Nor should we neglect Cousin's activity on a philological plane, even though his knowledge of Greek seems to have been rather modest. Philology was not considered by Hegel to be particularly desirable or urgent – on account of the extraordinary flourishing of philological studies in German universities from the later eighteenth century onwards – but in France it served to fill gaps which really existed. In Cousin the interest in philology was surely marginal compared to his predominant interest in a large-scale synthesis of the history of philosophy. But this synthesis was related to specific historical and political conditions, whose change determined a rejection which, as frequently happens in similar cases, was highly polemical and sometimes ungenerous. But Cousin's influence on the institutionalisation of philosophy in France was decisive.⁴⁰ Even leaving aside the institutional aspect, Cousin's legacy was considerable: the specialisation of the history of philosophy in France during the second half of the nineteenth century was to a great extent the result of his cultural and academic policy, viewed as the far-reaching prosecution of his philological and monographic works, and, on a different plane, the taste for brilliant, incisive intuition which has often characterised French historiography of philosophy even to the present day is, nevertheless, heir to the passion, verve, and dramatic ability, with which the young professor succeeded in captivating the multitude of listeners and students in the lecture halls of the *collège du Plessis* and then the Sorbonne.

5.1.6 On Cousin's life, works, and thought (general studies): DBF, IX, cols 1069–73; DPh, I, pp. 630–634; EF, II, cols 587–590; EphU, III/1 pp. 1692–1693; Ch. Secrétan, *La philosophie de Cousin* (Paris, 1868); Ravaisson, pp. 69–84; Sainte-Beuve, pp. 133–178 and 326–385; Taine, pp. 79–202; J. Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, *V. Cousin. Sa vie et sa correspondance* (Paris, 1885), 3 vols; P. Janet, *V. Cousin et son oeuvre* (Paris, 1885); J. Simon, *V. Cousin* (Paris, 1887; 4th ed. 1910); Ch. Bréville, 'L'arrestation de V. Cousin en Allemagne (1824–1825)', *La Nouvelle Revue*, t. XVII (1910), pp. 477–507; t. XVIII (1910), pp. 26–48; B. Knoop, *V. Cousin, Hegel und die französische Romantik. Einflüsse und Wirkungen* (Berlin, 1932); Bréhier, p. 22; H.J. Ody, *V. Cousin. Studien zur Geschichte der französischen Bildungswesens und seiner Beziehungen zu Deutschland in der ersten Hälfte des*

⁴⁰ Cf. Billard, *De l'École à la République*, p. 105: "Cousin est à l'origine de ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui l'institution philosophique. La philosophie enseignée dans les classes terminales des lycées, la philosophie universitaire indépendante de la théologie, le recrutement des professeurs, la détermination de leur mission, tout cela, qui subsiste encore aujourd'hui, nous le lui devons. [...] Son originalité est d'avoir élaboré une philosophie qui tend vers l'enseignement public et, réciproquement, d'avoir commencé de penser un système d'enseignement qui ne repose que sur le rationalisme philosophique, et ces deux aspects sont inséparables".

19. *Jahrhunderts* (Karlsruhe, 1932–1935), 2 vols; Id., *V. Cousin. Ein Lebensbild im deutsch-französischen Kulturraum* (Saarbrücken, 1953); Foucher, *La philosophie catholique en France*, ch. vi (on the relations with the Catholic Church); A. Cornelius, *Die Geschichtslehre von V. Cousins, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Hegelschen Einflüsse* (Geneva and Paris, 1958); D. Charlton, *Secular Religions in France, 1815–1870* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 96–106; J. Lefranc, ‘V. Cousin ministre de l’instruction publique’, *L’enseignement philosophique*, II (1988), 6, pp. 52–64; B. Hemmerdinger, ‘V. Cousin et son itinéraire politique’, *Belfagor*, XLIII (1988), pp. 571–576; ‘Correspondance Schelling-Cousin, 1818–1845’, ed. by Chr. Mauve and P. Vermeren, *Corpus*, nos 18–19 (1991), pp. 199–249; P. Macherey, ‘Les débuts philosophiques de V. Cousin’, *ibid.*, pp. 29–49; P. Vermeren, ‘Le baiser Lamourette de la philosophie. Les partis philosophiques contre l’éclectisme de V. Cousin’, *ibid.*, pp. 61–83; J.-P. Cotten, *Autour de V. Cousin. Une politique de la philosophie* (Paris, 1992); Id., *La jeunesse de V. Cousin et la naissance de la “nouvelle philosophie française”*, Thèse de doctorat (Univ. de Paris I, 1996); C. Bernard, *V. Cousin ou la religion de la philosophie* (Toulouse, 1993); G. Tcha, *V. Cousin, éditeur et interprète de Maine de Biran*, Thèse de doctorat (Univ. de Paris I, 1993 [microfiches]); M. Albrecht, *Eklektik. Eine Begriffsgeschichte mit Hinweisen auf die Philosophie- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Stuttgart and Bad Cannstatt, 1994), pp. 607–625 (‘Cousin, die Künstler und die Mediziner’); Vermeren (pp. 125–150: ‘La mise en scène de la philosophie’; pp. 353–358: biography; pp. 359–373: bibliography); Ragghianti (in particular pp. 52–84 and 373, concerning ‘L’eclettismo come metodo e come concezione del mondo’); *V. Cousin homo theologico-politicus. Philologie, philosophie, histoire littéraire*, ed. by É. Fauquet (Paris, 1997); J. Billard, *L’éclectisme* (Paris, 1997); Id., *De l’École à la République: Guizot et V. Cousin*, pp. 105–219; Schneider, pp. 180–216; ‘Lettere di Alexander von Humboldt a V. Cousin’, ed. by R. Ragghianti, *GCFL*, LXXIX (2000), pp. 99–117; U. Rancan de Azevedo Marques, ‘V. Cousin, Th. Jouffroy e l’eclettismo del primo Ottocento’, *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, LV (2000), pp. 187–204; R. Ragghianti, ‘V. Cousin et la querelle du panthéisme’, in V. Cousin, *Nouvelle théodicée d’après la méthode psychologique*, ed. by R. Ragghianti (Paris, 2001), pp. 7–51; V. Cousin, *Souvenirs d’Allemagne. Notes d’un journal de voyage en l’année 1817*, ed. by D. Bourel (Paris, 2011); R. Ragghianti, *Filosofia, storiografia e vita civile. L’eclettismo francese tra Cousin e Bergson* (Pisa, 2014); C. Borghero, ‘Clio e Atena. Le origini “impure” della storiografia filosofica francese del primo Ottocento’, in Id., *Interpretazioni, categorie, finzioni. Narrare la storia della filosofia* (Firenze, 2017), pp. 369–410; D. Antoine-Mahut, ‘Une philosophie française sans philosophie française. L’éclectisme de V. Cousin’, in König-Pralong, Meliadd, and Radeva (eds), *The Territories of Philosophy in Modern Historiography*, pp. 149–168; Ead., ‘Experimental Method and the Spiritualist Soul: The case of Victor Cousin’, *Perspectives on Science*, XXVII (2019), 5, pp. 680–703; D. Whistler, “‘True Empiricism’: The Stakes of the Cousin-Schelling Controversy”, *ibid.*, pp. 739–765.

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Chapter 6

The Italian Historiography of Philosophy: Eclecticism and the Philosophy of Experience



Luciano Malusa

Introduction

(a) Preliminary remarks

During the age of the Restoration (1815–1848), Italian culture was marked by the increasing spread of the Romantic movement and a new reference to the Christian tradition. Even so, we should not generalise: the tendency to rediscover Christianity as a spiritual and cultural force in a figure like Alessandro Manzoni, for example, was paralleled by another legacy of Enlightenment culture in the field of the social sciences and economics (this is the case of Melchiorre Gioia, Giandomenico Romagnosi, and Giuseppe Ferrari), and in humanistic studies (here we can observe Enlightenment themes and materialistic elements persisting in the philological study of Antiquity and the moral reflections of Giacomo Leopardi). In this situation conditioned by static and often oppressive political regimes, Italian intellectuals did not appear to be driven by the same speculative creativity and enthusiasm for novelty as the other more advanced European nations. It is therefore no wonder that in Italy during the first half of the nineteenth century, the historiography of philosophy was heavily dependent on currents from abroad, particularly France, even though many raised their voices to demand a “national path” to philosophy. Translations of French and German general histories of philosophy were a constant element that compensated for the lack of works in Italian. Further on we shall examine the translation of Tennemann’s famous textbook more in detail; for the moment, let us mention some other general histories of philosophy which were translated into Italian: the *Auszug des Wissenswürdigsten aus der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Vienna, 1836) by Johann Peithner Ritter von Lichtenfels (translated as *Compendio delle cose più degne a sapersi della storia della filosofia*, ed. by D. Meschinelli, Vicenza,

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1846) and the *Abriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1837) by K.F.L. Kannegieszer (translated as *Compendio della storia della filosofia*, ed. by F. Bertinaria, Turin, 1843, Naples, 1854, with notes by F. Prudeniano). Giovanni Battista Passerini himself translated the *Umrisse zur Geschichte der Philosophie* (Berlin, 1839) by the Schellingian Eduard Schmidt, to which he added an interesting preface which he pointed out the advances made by the historiography of philosophy in Germany (*Delineazione della storia della filosofia*, Capolago, 1844). In 1840, again in Capolago, Passerini published a translation of Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, following the edition provided by Eduard Gans.

A number of translations of French works were published: Charles Renouvier's *Manuel de philosophie moderne* (Paris, 1842) was translated by L. Pistolese (*Manuale di filosofia moderna*, with notes, modifications and additions, Naples, 1844, 2 vols, 2nd ed. 1857), while Joseph Tissot's *Histoire abrégée de la philosophie* (Paris, 1840) was translated by Nicola Corcia: *Storia compendiata della filosofia* (Naples, 1841). Equally noteworthy is the translation of the *Précis d'histoire de la philosophie* (Paris, 1834, 1847³) written by Louis-Antoine de Salinis and Bruno-Dominique de Scorbiac, which was edited by the 'Società per la Biblioteca Cattolica' with the title *Compendio di storia della filosofia* (Naples, 1842, 4th ed. 1853). In all probability, the translation was carried out by a group of teachers at the Naples Seminary under the supervision of Gaetano Sanseverino, an outstanding exponent of the return to the philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas and the founder of the periodical *La Scienza e la Fede*. It is also to be noted that the demand for translations of works from French was relatively limited in Italy because the cultivated class was largely fluent in this language.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, what characterised Italian philosophical culture as a whole was a general reference to French thought, both because of the close political relations which had been established with France during the Napoleonic age and because of the wide circulation of the works produced by the *Idéologues* and subsequently by the eclectics. However, at the same time, a sort of 'anti-gallicization' started to emerge, claiming the originality of Italian thought. This resulted in a remarkable mix of linguistic and cultural dependence and fiery opposition to a hegemony felt as an imposition. In this period, the historiography of philosophy alternated therefore between an attitude of dependence on ideas and schemes coming from France and a withdrawal from the interpretation of modern thought contained in them. This confrontation of Italian and French culture was enriched by German-speaking voices, which were in turn considered to be intrusive and dominating on a political level (with respect to Austria), although many of its expressions were the object of interest.

As for the teaching of the history of philosophy, the situation in Italian schools and universities and that in German universities were profoundly different. While the major German historiographical schools were busy discussing problems of fundamental importance for an understanding of Western thought, in the Italian area interest in the history of philosophy continued to be confined to cultivated circles, albeit not necessarily of an academic kind, and frequently revolved round the Italian philosophical tradition which, considered in relation to the other speculative

traditions, was regarded as the most ancient and reliable. Indeed, from the very beginning of the Restauration there was a need to link the renewal of Italian thought (and therefore the fight against the sensationalism of Enlightenment thinkers and subjectivism) to the remotest origins of philosophical thinking in the Italian peninsula. The idea that a national resurgence had to take place alongside a cultural resurgence became increasingly widespread, the essential constituent of which was a gradual awareness of the national roots of philosophical thinking. Italian writers, however, were not capable of initiating a profound theoretical and methodological analysis in the field of the historiography of philosophy, and so they were forced to draw inspiration from theories from abroad. The orientation they initially accepted and discussed was the eclectic perspective, even though there were notable attempts to overcome the dualism between Italian philosophy and the doctrines which had arisen in other nations, principally in the modern age. For this reason, outstanding Italian philosophers like Galluppi and Rosmini devoted themselves to an understanding of the development of philosophy in its entirety, beyond national traditions.

Apart from the works by these two authors and the vast (and not purely Italian) history of philosophy contained in the *Supplimenti* added by Baldassarre Poli to the translation of Tennemann's *Grundriss*, no other valuable general histories of philosophy appeared in Italy. Giacomo Leopardi's meditations and early studies reveal an original approach to the philosophical past (especially with regard to Antiquity), which, although rigorously accurate, remained in its preparatory phase. Strictly speaking, Leopardi cannot be considered a historian of philosophy, but we should not forget that he tried to conceive of a plan for a history of human thought. Indeed, his early *Saggio sugli errori popolari degli antichi* (1815) and even more his "poly-historic" work on the Church Fathers,¹ although erudite compilations, already showed his rigorous enquiry into the history of philosophers and theologians. These works were not the product of an outdated and narrow culture, but show his wide-ranging critical skill and should be associated with the typical eighteenth-century idea (traceable to Pierre Bayle) of a history of philosophy understood as a history of man's "fallacies" and the progression of reason. Indeed, for Leopardi, enquiring into mistakes and prejudices was an essential part of philosophical work: "The world is full of errors; and man's primary concern should be to know what is true. A large part of the truths the philosophers had to establish would be worthless if error did not exist; another part of these truths is still made worthless because of many errors which in fact continue to exist". And he goes on: "Antiquity delivers great lessons to a philosopher, when it is regarded in such a way as to allow us to take advantage of the example of the ancients": *Saggio sopra gli errori popolari degli antichi*, ed. by G.B. Bronzini (Venosa, 1997), p. 61.

¹This compilation was entitled *Fragmenta Patrum Graecorum. Auctorum historiae ecclesiasticae fragmenta*. See C. Moreschini's excellent edition (Florence, 1976). Leopardi's early philosophical and philological works are now published in G. Leopardi, *Scritti filologici 1817–1832*, ed. by G. Pacella and S. Timpanaro (Florence, 1969). Cf. also G. Leopardi, *Dissertazioni filosofiche 1811–1812*, with an introduction by M. De Poli and notes and indexes by R. Gagliardi (Montepulciano, 1983); Id., *Dissertazioni filosofiche*, ed. by T. Crivelli (Padua, 1995).

(b) *The translations of Tennemann's Grundriss*

The translations of the histories of philosophy written by the Kantians Tennemann and Buhle and by some other foreign authors of lesser stature show that in Italy the beginnings of the historiography of philosophy in the early nineteenth century were related to the spread of Kant's thought. These 'great translations' (we use this definition in order to distinguish them from the multitude of 'minor translations' mentioned above) served to free Italian culture from provincialism. They provided a helpful means of information that rendered obsolete the eighteenth-century works by Appiano Buonafede, which were still admired by Romagnosi (who, in his enthusiastic patriotic fervour, declared his preference for them over the works of the German authors themselves) and came out in new editions in 1837 and 1838 in the framework of the *Classici italiani del secolo xviii* published in Milan.² Nevertheless, the translation of Buhle's great history of philosophy did not pave the way for the spread of Kantian thought: the *Storia della filosofia moderna dal Risorgimento delle lettere sino a Kant, del Signore G. Amadeo Buhle, Professore di Gottinga, tradotta in lingua italiana da Vincenzo Lancetti*, Milan, Tip. di Commercio, 1821–1822, printed in twelve duodecimo vols, remained a mere work of historical reference.³

The circulation in Italy of Wilhelm Tennemann's historiographical works, and the 'short' version of his textbook in particular, gave rise to two outstanding attempts to make these works more widespread: the translation by Gaetano Modena of the *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* directly from the German (following A. Wendt's edition, Leipzig, 1820) and the publication by Francesco Longhena of a translation based on the French version edited by Victor Cousin (G. Tennemann, *Manuel de l'histoire de la philosophie*, Paris, 1829), completed with annotations and observations compiled by a group of scholars. These two textbooks appeared simultaneously in 1832, the former in Pavia and the latter in Milan. By integrating the translation with some specially composed *Supplimenti*, both translators aimed to intervene with their own judgements and contributions to better illustrate the condition of philosophy in Italy.

Gaetano Modena (1784–1868) studied in Padua – initially in the diocesan Seminary and then at the Faculty of Law – where he graduated in 1815 and was subsequently appointed to teach ecclesiastical law in the Faculty of Theology (1815–1819), with Antonio Rosmini and Niccolò Tommaseo among his pupils. Later he was called to teach the history of philosophy at the University of Pavia, though the teaching of this discipline was abolished by the Austrian government in 1845. Modena was therefore transferred to Venice (and then to Zara) and he became a headmaster in Austrian secondary schools. The translation published by Modena was entitled *Compendio della storia della filosofia di Guglielmo Tennemann* (Pavia, Bizzoni, 1832, 2 vols), and it was followed three years later by the *Supplimenti al compendio della storia della filosofia di Guglielmo Tennemann compilati dall'ab. Gaetano Modena* (Pavia, 1835). In 1847, at the end of his teaching period in Pavia,

² Cf. *Models*, III, pp. 377–378.

³ Cf. *Models*, III, p. 835.

Modena published in Venice a work entitled *L'Eclettismo o la filosofia del senso comune, quale ultimo risultato della storia filosofica*. Modena's translation of Tennemann's textbook must be considered the first, both chronologically (the publisher Bizzoni started to print the work much earlier than the publisher in Milan) and because of the fact that it followed the original German text. Modena even declared that he had completed his translation of the work in August 1824, "as is confirmed in the Proceedings of the Head of the Faculty of Philosophy of this Imperial and Royal University of Pavia", and that he had started it as early as 1821 (see *Compendio*, I, 'Prefazione del Traduttore', p. 14), concomitant with the publication of the first Italian translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, edited by Vincenzo Mantovani and published in Pavia again by the printer Bizzoni in 1820–1822.⁴ The *Supplimenti* added by Modena, however, made no mention of this translation of Kant's work.

The pages of the *Supplimenti* clearly indicate Modena's support of eclecticism. In his preface, while claiming the pre-eminence and independence of his version with respect to that published by Cousin, he cannot contain himself and takes up the fundamental themes of Cousin's 'Préface', contrasting the four unilateral systems (sensualism, spiritualism, scepticism, and mysticism) with the "eclectic method of philosophising", which induces us to "sift each system and grasp what is true in it, in order to compose the only true philosophy, which rises above all possible systems". This dependence on Cousin is confirmed in the short preface ('A chi legge') added to the *Supplimenti*, where Modena again proposes a juxtaposition of the major modern historians of philosophy (Brucker, Tiedemann, and Tennemann) and the speculative positions of Descartes, Locke, and Kant (*Supplimenti al Compendio*, p. 5).⁵ Convinced of the validity of eclectic philosophy, Modena refers to the Scottish philosophy of common sense and quotes a passage from a work of Dugald Stewart. He also considers Degérando as a writer close to eclecticism and quotes a passage from his *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie*: "Intermediate and complex opinions generally meet with little success, while extreme and absolute opinions are the only ones to elicit applause, endearing themselves to the public. However, on one hand, the History of Philosophy shows that all conciliative systems, all impartial doctrines only had few enthusiastic supporters and were frequently to the advantage of their authors; on the other, the History of Philosophy in its entirety leads us back to these systems and doctrines as the really wisest in themselves and the most advantageous to science".⁶ In Modena's case, these references to transalpine philosophy and his own interest in general philosophy arose from an awareness of the "lack of a particular and, so to speak, national School and doctrine" and, consequently, from the inclination to "examine and embrace the systems and doctrines of the other nations" (*Compendio*, I, p. 12). Indeed, Modena tried to

⁴Cf. G. Santinello, 'Le prime traduzioni italiane dell'opera di Kant', in *La tradizione kantiana in Italia* (Messina, 1986), I, pp. 295–323.

⁵Cf. *Cours*, 12, pp. 312–313, 321–325, and 332–335.

⁶Cf. *Hist. comp.*, 'Introduction', pp. xxxvii–xxxviii.

reconcile sensualist philosophy with the philosophy of consciousness and the traditionalist philosophy of Maistre, Bonald, and Lamennais, convinced that the currents of thought of his own time formed part of “a domain that includes all these systems and within which some thinkers, instead of holding exclusively to one position, do nothing but move from one to the other, trying to find the truth it may contain” (*Supplimenti*, pp. 119–120).

In dealing with Italian philosophy, Modena does not aim to go through the whole history of philosophy and limits himself to claiming the importance of the Italian philosophy produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with regard to Tennemann and his publisher Wendt, openly regretting the limited importance given to the thought of Vico (see his treatment of Italian thought after the age of the Renaissance, in *Supplimenti*, pp. 279–282). In order to integrate Tennemann’s work, Modena also published some short supplements concerning German philosophy, which contain useful information on the German universities in particular; he developed English and Scottish philosophy and principally expanded on French thought. In this third part of the *Supplimenti*, the importance given to the “eclectic or rational spiritualistic school” shows his own inclination. Indeed, his official defence of Italian philosophy is fulfilled in his account of the philosophers (Vico, Zanotti, Stellini, Genovesi, Gerdil, Soave) who are presented as the best of the period, the heirs of a tradition which began in the Renaissance and subsequently moved to France and England (and then to Germany) because Italian thinkers were unable to concretely realize their original intuitions (cf. *L’Eclettismo*, pp. 197–199).

Francesco Longhena’s publication was more ambitious than that of Modena, although its dependence on the French version diminished the originality of the translation. Longhena was an uncommon figure within the framework of Lombard culture: he was a bibliophile, a poet and then an art critic and man of letters; it is worth mentioning his essay on Dante (*L’itinerario astronomico di Dante Alighieri per l’Inferno e per il Purgatorio*, Milan, 1861) as well as a number of observations he wrote concerning Agostino Theiner’s *Storia del pontificato di Clemente XIII* (Milan, 1854). The *Manuale della storia della filosofia di Guglielmo Tennemann tradotto da Francesco Longhena, con Note e Supplimenti dei professori Giandomenico Romagnosi e Baldassarre Poli* (vols I and II, Milan, Fontana, 1832; vols III and IV: *Supplimenti*, *ibid.*, 1836) came out in a second edition which was also published in four volumes (Milan, Silvestri, 1855, although the cover of the volumes is dated 1857). Longhena justified his decision to base himself on the French translation by declaring that Cousin was the author who could best grasp the spirit of the work (*Manuale*, I, ‘Il traduttore italiano’, p. vii).

But the French translation had omitted some parts relating to the thought of that period, so Longhena restored them thanks to a translation made directly from the German which he entrusted to the person who had previously translated August Heinrich Matthiae’s *Lehrbuch (Manuale di filosofia*, Lugano, 1829; 2nd ed. 1834: this translation, with an essay by Cousin concerning the “new French philosophy” and a short description of the history of philosophy, was reviewed positively in the *Biblioteca italiana*, LX (1830), part II, pp. 375–380). Neither the reviewer nor Longhena himself mentions the name of this translator, whose role was clearly only

functional; the translator was in fact Giambattista Passerini, mentioned above, who had moved to Canton Ticino from his native town of Brescia and had adhered to Hegelianism after studying Cousin's thought. In this case too, it seemed necessary to integrate Tennemann's work with some *Supplimenti*, which were written by Baldassarre Poli with a wide-ranging plan, and which indeed came out four years after the publication of the *Manuale*. The importance of this second translation of Tennemann's work consists in the fact that it provides the only noteworthy general history of philosophy (although restricted to Italian philosophy) which was produced in Italy during the early nineteenth century. Another interesting aspect of the *Manuale* are by the notes added by Poli and Giandomenico Romagnosi to explain some crucial passages in the history of philosophy.

(c) *The developments of eclecticism in Italy*

Victor Cousin's eclecticism became established in Italy a few years after the promotion of Modena and Poli's theory of an 'Italian eclecticism'. Cousin had established relations with Italian culture from the early 1820s onwards, but his methodology for the history of philosophy only became known thanks to the circulation of his most important works on the history of thought. A discussion of eclecticism as a conciliatory philosophical doctrine, however, took place at different times. It was above all Galluppi who made it his object, even though he did not reserve any space for eclecticism in the first edition of his *Lettere filosofiche*. Only in the second edition, as we shall see later on, did he include letter XIV, namely *Risultamenti del criticismo*, where he hinted at Cousin. But although he was on good terms with Cousin, Galluppi did not seem to be a follower of his positions. Despite the fact that he translated Cousin's *Fragments philosophiques*, and had become a member of the *Institut Royal de France* thanks to Cousin's recommendation, he clearly did not share several of the French thinker's doctrines, especially that of the universal soul (or Spirit). At most, he can be considered the disseminator of the positions held by eclecticism and can be regarded as an eclectic *sui generis* on account of his tendency to accept the different currents of modern thought as the heralds of the unavoidable aspirations of the human mind.⁷ Moreover, the spread of eclecticism in Italy was related to the need to acquire more information and reflection on German transcendental philosophy.

We have confirmation of the full assimilation of eclecticism as a method for the historiography of philosophy in the Sicilian Salvatore Mancino (Palermo, 1802–1866). Mancino taught for many years at the Palermo Seminary and was the author of a successful textbook of philosophy with a clear eclectic orientation: *Elementi di filosofia per uso del Seminario arcivescovile di Palermo* (Palermo, 1835–1836), 2 vols. This textbook (whose fourteenth edition appeared in Naples in 1861) was written with the intention of emulating Galluppi. Unlike Galluppi, though, Mancino considered eclecticism to be entirely well-founded, as Cousin had

⁷Cf. Malusa, *Storiografia*, pp. 41–42; G. Tortora, *Pasquale Galluppi e il materialismo del Settecento francese* (Naples, 1989), pp. 22–23.

subsequently dispelled all doubts relating to the orthodoxy of his theories on the divinity, creation, and the Spirit (see ‘Sopra l’avvertimento premesso da V. Cousin alla terza edizione de’ *Frammenti filosofici*’, *Effemeridi scientifiche e letterarie per la Sicilia*, XXVIII (1840), pp. 29–35). In a booklet entitled *Considerazioni sulla storia della filosofia* (Palermo, 1842), which was published again in *Elementi di filosofia*, vol. II (see the Florence edition of 1849), Mancino reiterated that the study of the history of philosophy allows us to better understand the free structure of philosophical learning.

In Naples in the late 1830s and the first half of the 1840s, the most outstanding authors were Stefano Cusani and Stanislao Gatti, who disseminated Cousin’s thought in the pages of the journals *Progresso delle scienze, delle lettere e delle arti*, and *Museo*, and developed its potentialities, also promoting the circulation of Schelling’s thought and some of Hegel’s ideas. Stefano Cusani (1815–1846) was a young man whose chief concern was to bring about a cultural reawakening in Naples inspired by liberal ideas, and his premature death was universally regretted as a serious loss. Some of his writings, which appeared in journals, were decisive in bringing the historiography of philosophy to Southern Italy, as in the case of the article ‘Del metodo filosofico e d’una sua storia infino agli ultimi sistemi di filosofia che sonosi veduti uscir fuori di Germania e di Francia’, *Progresso delle scienze, delle lettere e delle arti*, n.s., VIII (1839), vol. xxii, pp. 175–216, now in S. Cusani, *Scritti editi*, ed. by F. Ottonello (Genoa, 1979), I, pp. 23–54. Here Cusani gives prominence to psychological observation as a means for grasping the “philosophical idea” that governs historical development. Indeed, “The whole of philosophy is present in history and recognising it in history is an unavoidable condition for every philosopher” (‘Del metodo filosofico’, p. 183, now in *Scritti editi*, I, p. 29). The mere recognition of the historical dimensions of philosophical systems and a description of these systems are not sufficient: Cusani maintained that the historiography of philosophy had to be reformed by means of a methodology involving a psychological understanding of the forms of mind and will.

In the article ‘Idea di una storia compendiata della filosofia’, published in instalments in the journal *Museo* between 1841 and 1842 (now in *Scritti editi*, II, pp. 325–357), Cusani affirmed that the history of philosophy can be viewed as consisting of three moments: the “internal movement of human intelligence subject to the division of its laws”; the “external manifestation of intelligence – through free will – in facts and events”; and finally the “relations established between ideas and actions, intelligence and the determinations of will, thought and human will” (*Scritti editi*, II, pp. 345–346). The intellect goes through a history of its own: we can say, in an almost Hegelian sense, that it is the idea-in-itself, the pure logical structure; it then becomes manifest through the translation of the will into the practical choices of history, which, in Hegelian terms, corresponds to the objective spirit. Finally, human accomplishments and intellectual judgements take part in a series of relations which constitute the whole development of philosophy; from a Hegelian perspective, one might say that what becomes manifest is the absolute spirit with its height, that is, philosophy. The philosophical idea “is nothing other than thought itself, it is the spirit of a people, not as it is observable in its institutions and in the

arts, but rather in the inviolable shelter of pure thought, of thought in itself" (II, pp. 411–412).

A similar interest in the Hegelian dialectic can be found in the eclecticism of Stanislao Gatti (1820–1870). In 1841 he founded the journal *Museo di Letteratura e Filosofia* and, in the introduction to the first issue, he emphasised the need to re-read the history of philosophy. He hoped that, after eighteenth-century scepticism and sensationalism, a new history, a new kind of politics, and a new philosophy could prevail: "Where the mind must be principally directed is the realm of thought and idea, the only object it may try to reach is a steady recognition of principles" (*Museo*, I (1841), vol. I, p. 18). This can take place thanks to a living relationship between science, history, and life. In his article 'Del progressivo svolgimento dell'idea filosofica nella storia' (*Museo*, I, 1841, vol. I, pp. 99–112; II, 1842, vol. III, pp. 3–11 and 97–105), which was also included in the collection of his early articles published after the unity of Italy (*Scritti varii di filosofia e letteratura* (Naples, 1861), vol. I, pp. 1–27), Gatti declared that the "philosophical idea" is constantly proceeding and consists of a progressive conquest of self-consciousness. Practising the history of philosophy means therefore treading the path of the "philosophical idea" through time, which makes the consciousness of the Spirit increasingly capable of knowing itself. According to the interpretation of these young Neapolitan thinkers, consciousness as a spiritual act becomes a universal consciousness. In his review of Galluppi's work *Considerazioni filosofiche su l'idealismo trascendentale e sul razionalismo assoluto* – published in *Museo*, II (1842), vol. IV, pp. 9–32 – Gatti addressed the theme of German transcendental philosophy. After expressing his agreement with Galluppi's criticisms, Gatti asked: "Now, were the efforts made by transcendental Idealism wasted with regard to science? Were they of no avail for philosophy?" From this moment onwards, phrases and terms apparently belonging to eclecticism proved instead to be close to idealistic philosophy. Gatti affirmed: "Fichte associated his name forever with the fact of reflection, and the theories he provided in favour of this perspective are undisputed. The development of all intellectual faculties takes place under the condition of reflection, and reflection takes place under the condition of will; the necessary mode of will is freedom" (p. 31). Gatti also tackled Schelling, explaining the development of his thought in a transcendental direction ('Schelling e l'idealismo trascendente', in *Scritti varii*, vol. I, pp. 99–134).

In approaching questions pertaining to the history of philosophy from the new perspective of a transcendental consciousness, Gatti was convinced that the "philosophical idea" had no national connotation. In his article 'Della filosofia in Italia' (which appeared in 1845 and was republished in *Scritti varii*, I, pp. 193–232) he affirmed that it is not possible to speak of a nationality of philosophy, but we should speak of a "different manner [...] of understanding the same truths". The rational principles constituting the object of study of philosophy "are imbued with life and value just like those that are used to explain all the human and cosmic facts of the universe, all facts relating to man and to civil communities" (I, p. 221). Gatti showed he was aware of the fact that during the Renaissance Italy made its contribution to European philosophy but was unable to proceed with these philosophies because

freedom of thought was suppressed. This did not so much originate the theory of the “circulation of Italian thought” (which was maintained by Spaventa, who after 1851 elaborated the theory of the Italian spirit as a “forerunner”), as another theory, which was to concur with that held by Augusto Vera (and his pupil Raffaele Mariano) that there was no Italian primacy in philosophy, and that not even the Renaissance was a privileged season for Italian thought, since it was linked to the destiny of all the other nations. Some of the statements in Gatti’s ‘Dell’epopea protestante’ (1851) seem to recall the positions held by Bertrando Spaventa and perhaps derived directly from him as a result of the discussions which occurred during the years before 1848 (see, for example, *Scritti varii*, I, p. 317); however, the general meaning of his considerations is that the true liberation of the Spirit took place in Germany between the Reformation and Romanticism.

(d) *The national tradition as a “philosophy of experience”*

In Italy at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the hegemony of sensationalism was strengthened by the *Idéologie*, which had imbued the cultivated Italian milieu in both the north and the south of the country. A figure close to the *Idéologues* was Pasquale Borrelli (1782–1849) from Abruzzi, who in the first pages of his *Introduzione alla filosofia naturale del pensiero* (published in Lugano in 1824 under the pseudonym Pirroallebasque and therefore prior to Galluppi’s *Lettere filosofiche*) created a historical outline of the problem of mind. This historical enquiry was intended to precede an elaborate theoretical investigation, and the so-called “genealogy of thought” should have been followed by another eight works aimed at studying all the aspects of an “ideological” enquiry in depth. Of the nine works planned, Borrelli only completed the *Principii della genealogia del pensiero* (Lugano, 1825), which dealt with sensation, judgement, the “connection of judgements as a form of ratiocination”, and will, in this order. The *Introduzione* and the *Principii* were published again in the *Opere filosofiche del signor Pirroallebasque* (Lugano, 1830), 4 vols (the *Introduzione* is included in vol. I).

Borrelli was fundamentally self-taught and during his exile after the liberal uprisings in Naples in 1820–21, he travelled around Austria and Germany. His considerations on the history of human thought were prompted by the need to compile an inventory of the solutions to the methods by which thought can proceed correctly. This was the fundamental problem tackled by the *Idéologues*, and Borrelli-Lallebasque addressed it, also trying to make use of the study of philosophy he had carried out before his law studies which enabled him to begin his career as a magistrate and then as a lawyer. In examining the problem of the origin of ideas, after disparaging the solutions put forward by the ancients and the Scholastics (*Introduzione alla filosofia naturale del pensiero*, in *Opere filosofiche*, I, p. 21), he dwells on the positions of rationalism and empiricism, showing a preference for the almost materialistic methodology of Cabanis and Erasmus Darwin, while he considers the “hypothetical” philosophy of Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant to be arbitrary (pp. 27–67). Making use of Vico’s categories, Borrelli affirms that Scholastic philosophy is “obscure”, the philosophy of Descartes and Leibniz is “fabulous”, and the experimental and inductive philosophy rooted in Bacon and Locke, is

“historical” (pp. 111–113). This last expression intended to mean that philosophy acquires the dimension of reality thanks to an exact description of the properties of the human mind. In the history of philosophy, the winning method is that which is based on nature, or rather on physiological data. Ideas originate from the senses, namely from a physiological mechanism. Erasmus Darwin discovered the “physiological ideology” and thus went back to the Baconian tradition (pp. 80–91). The physician Cabanis refined this method and paved the way for a practically indefinite progress in study and the very outline of the “philosophy of thought” (pp. 68 and 91–102). Borrelli’s criticism of epistemological apriorism also included the Scottish school, since he judged the justification of *common sense*, understood as a patrimony of consciousness, to be insufficient (pp. 170–175).

Indeed, in Italian culture, in the 1820s and ‘30s, the problem of the relationship between experience and rationality, between concrete sensible datum (as well as the mechanism allowing the acquisition of the patrimony of ideas) and the ideal datum viewed in its universal value, was perceived to be an important question. The *Idéologie* represented the reductionist position, with respect to which eclecticism and idealistic philosophy offered solutions involving, respectively, an accord between reason and experience and the subordination of experience to reason. In this situation, there were evident reasons for creating an analysis of the history of philosophy capable of showing the merits of both the empiricist and spiritualistic position and the idealistic and rationalistic position. During the first half of the nineteenth century, in Italian philosophy the sensationalism of the *Idéologues* and the experimental tradition fundamentally agreed in directing their attention to certain philosophical traditions whose history looked profitable and paradigmatic, and it was also thanks to this hybrid alliance that the question of the nature and merits of Italian philosophy started to emerge. This theme was already present in Gian Domenico Romagnosi’s principal work, *Dell’indole e dei fattori dell’incivilimento con esempio del suo risorgimento in Italia* (Milan, 1832; enlarged edition: Milan, 1839), in which he observed that, after the centuries of the Middle Ages and decline, the true cultural resurgence of the Italians corresponded to the attainment of a profound balance between “experience” and “reason” (or “demonstration of principles”). It was according to this perspective that Romagnosi contributed to the work of updating and integrating the Italian version of Tennemann’s textbook.

The awareness of the originality of Italian thought became more consistent thanks to a work by Terenzio Mamiani della Rovere entitled *Del rinnovamento della filosofia antica italiana*. It was published in Paris in 1834 by Pihan-Delaforest and then appeared again in Padua and Milan in 1836, while much enlarged editions came out in Paris in 1839 and Florence in 1842. Mamiani himself (1799–1885) went into exile in Paris after the unrests of 1831 in the Papal States and in his work he put forward the idea of a reconciliation between the ideality of thought and the positivity of experience, finding the first manifestation of this in the early Italian philosophers, that is to say, in the thinkers who flourished in Magna Graecia. In addition to Vico’s theme of the “most ancient wisdom” of the Italians, he also refers to the theories contained in Vincenzo Cuoco’s *Platone in Italia* (cf. *Models*, III, pp. 253–254). Subsequently (after 1850) Mamiani opted for a historiographical

view that placed Platonism, instead of the most ancient philosophy of the Italians, at the centre of the national philosophical tradition, thus mitigating those empiricist elements that greatly irritated Rosmini to the extent of leading him to write a confutation of it: *Il Rinnovamento della filosofia in Italia proposto dal C.T. Mamiani della Rovere ed esaminato da Antonio Rosmini Serbati* (Milan, 1836). In this polemic, Luigi Blanch took sides with Mamiani: in his review of the work – which appeared in *Progresso delle scienze, delle lettere e delle arti*, IV (1835), vol. XII, pp. 27–51 (now in Blanch, pp. 237–259) – albeit with some changes in a universalistic direction, he took sides with the theory of the primacy of Italian philosophy as a philosophy of experience: indeed, for Blanch, the reconciliation of “nationality” with “humanity” was the real purpose of Mamiani’s work. Mamiani was also supported by Giuseppe Ferrari (in *Biblioteca italiana*, XX (1835), tome LXXVIII, pp. 381–401), Michele Parma (in *Ricoglitore italiano e straniero*, II (1835), part II, pp. 625–685), and Vincenzo Gioberti, who considered the *Rinnovamento* a confirmation of the theory of the supremacy of the Italians in the field of “philosophical sciences” (V. Gioberti, *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani*, ed. by U. Redanò (Milan, 1939), II, p. 46).

The following theories were developed in the *Rinnovamento*: the philosophical temperament of the Italians consisted of a “positive philosophy” and a “definite, experimental method” (*Del Rinnovamento* (Milan, 1836), p. 50); the premonitory signs of this philosophy are present in the thought of Archimedes, which made good use of the whole tradition of Italian thought (Mamiani refers to the thought of Empedocles rather than that of the most ancient Pythagoreanism: pp. 12–13); and the renewal of ancient Italian philosophy was due to the thought of the Renaissance. For Mamiani, there were three “restorations” of authentic Italian thought: the Socratic, the Alexandrian, and that of the Renaissance. The latter was the most substantial, when the legacy of the most vigorous ancient thought returned powerfully and persuasively. Mamiani acknowledges that there were two currents in the Renaissance: that which brought about the annihilation of Scholasticism and Peripateticism in general, represented mainly by Pomponazzi, and the constructive current, embodied by Leonardo and Galileo, but also Bruno, Telesio, and Campanella (pp. 17, 27–28, 34, and 39–40). With Galileo, Italian philosophy became authoritative because the physical sciences, which were greatly expanding, were accompanied by the speculative sciences, which had remained behind the times. Galileo did not appreciate logic and pure speculation, because he considered them to be “absolutely incapable of finding anything new”; but he thought that it was possible to associate experience with reasoning, and hence that it was also possible to create a philosophical reading of the universe (pp. 21 and 44–45).

The historical summaries on the origins and vicissitudes of Italian thought which were inspired by Mamiani’s thesis shared the conviction that the philosophy that originated and developed in Italy was in no way inferior to the philosophies of other nations. This idea was based on the aspiration of historiography to create a consciousness of the strong identity of Italian culture. This was the case for two minor figures of nineteenth-century Italian cultural history who agreed with each other in identifying the common element as the growth of the “positive spirit” rather than

metaphysical abstractions: Clemente Sancasciani (1816–1877) and Giuseppe Pezza-Rossa (1811–1875). The former was a Tuscan physician, professor at the University of Pisa, and later director of the hospital of Ravenna; the latter was a Mantuan priest and a highly esteemed teacher of rhetoric and eloquence in the Mantua diocesan Seminary, at the time of Enrico Tazzoli and Luigi Martini and in the years when Roberto Ardigò was a student there. In his dissertation *Difesa della filosofia italiana dell'osservazione e dell'esperienza* (Florence, 1840; new ed. in Tolomio, pp. 301–320), Sancasciani initially observes that experience, which philosophy recognizes as the main path for reaching truth, was frequently neglected or even hindered in the course of the history of thought. Despite all opposition, the only real philosophy is “experimental philosophy”: from Galilei to Gassendi and Locke we can observe a broadening of speculation that increasingly confirms the efforts made by the great Italian scientist (Tolomio, pp. 301–302 and 315–319).

Pezza-Rossa wrote *Lo spirito della filosofia italiana. Ragionamento* (Mantua, 1842; new ed. in Tolomio, pp. 323–346) and, compared to the previous work, it contains more historical references and arguments concerning the primacy of Italian philosophy. This *Ragionamento* was published before Gioberti's *Primato* and therefore represented an independent voice with respect to those who depicted the Italian tradition in the light of neo-Guelf theories. Although he was an ecclesiastic, Pezza-Rossa was a free spirit and showed little sympathy for Aquinas' philosophy, which various writers were presenting at the time as the true Christian philosophy (see *Saggi di filosofia cristiana sulle traccie dei Padri e Dottori della Chiesa*, Mantua, 1845). In his frequent contributions to Lombard journals (primarily the *Biblioteca italiana*), he invariably reiterated the moderate vocation of Italian philosophy, which distanced itself from both metaphysical and sensationalist and materialistic excesses. For Pezza-Rossa, Italian thought was the first in history to “lay the foundations of the philosophical edifice”; from the age of the Pythagoreans onwards, Italian philosophy pursued the “natural and tentative” method (Tolomio, pp. 323 and 342). Thanks to this method, “our ancient philosophy was able to accord to the senses, sentiments, and reason nothing more and nothing less than what is due to them, and it prevented the senses and sentiments from surmounting reason while preventing reason from rejecting their authority and power”. With the Romans, the purity of the Pythagorean methodological position was lost and only a trace of it, if any, was left in practical philosophy. The “spirit of action” was preserved with the Romans and represented an element of security against the spread of mysticism which had damaged so much of Oriental thought (pp. 328 and 330). Italian Pythagoreanism was able to outlive both the advent of Christianity and the fall of the Roman Empire. In fact, the new religion assimilated the spirit of this philosophy, which was characterised by the ability to grasp truth thanks to the joint efforts of reason and experience, and it was also marked by a repugnance for abstruse and deceptive philosophies (p. 331).

The positive spirit continued even after the establishment of Scholasticism, which was due in part to a prevailing recrudescent barbarity and in part to a submission to the Aristotelian model, which revived abstractions and useless distinctions. Some historians err in considering Scholasticism as the distinguishing mark of all

Italian culture in the Middle Ages, which appeared in fact to be imbued with a spirit of positivity in the field of research applied to commerce, exploration, and the study of new technology in craft and seafaring (pp. 337–338). According to Pezza-Rossa, the first impulse in Italian thought to keep its distance from the incipient Scholastic perspective can be traced back to Boethius and the propagation of experimental medicine (already present in the Roman age) (pp. 333–335). Despite some evident deviations in Pezza-Rossa's judgements, there emerges an overall historical view of considerable interest which succeeds in condensing an orientation which was widespread in Italian culture. Pezza-Rossa saw the manifestation of different anti-Scholastic aspirations in the Renaissance, and these aspirations were to follow different paths which allowed the philosophy of experience to advance further. Platonism met with failure (there is the example of Patrizi's syncretism: p. 340), but the orientation which might be defined as naturalistic established itself thanks to the "destructive" speculation of Pomponazzi ("a Pygmy in his body but a giant in his mind, more than others he gained a penetrating insight into the spirit of the philosophy of his homeland": pp. 341–342), and it later reached a triumph with Campanella.

Two peculiar features which characterise the priest Pezza-Rossa are his exaltation of naturalism (something shared by his student Ardigò) and at the same time his lack of consideration for Platonism, despite the influence it had exercised on sixteenth-century thought and the thought of Campanella himself. Without being aware of the influence of Plato on Galilei's thought, Pezza-Rossa was convinced that the Tuscan thinker completed the work of Renaissance naturalism and led Italian philosophy to a new condition, since it granted experimentation an absolutely outstanding position in the investigation of truth. Hence he can summarise the meaning of the restored harmony between experience and reason in the Renaissance in the following words: "It is therefore evident that Italy – sometimes more, sometimes less – has always possessed an excellent philosophy of its own, that the inductive and experimental analytic method was not known but rather practised in Italy, and that Italian thought was not guided by mere abstractions, general and capricious principles, but by the observation of facts and experience" (p. 345).

The 1840s saw the publication of other works which saw the philosophy of experience as the outstanding element to characterize the Italian tradition, even though there are differences between these works and the theories formulated by Baldassarre Poli in 1836 on the agreement between empirical and rational systematics in eclectic philosophy. The philosophy of experience certainly represents a harmonization between recourse to fact and reason, but this cannot constitute a concession to eclecticism. A similar position was shared by the historical outline created by Francesco Paolo Bozzelli (1786–1864), which was presented to the Naples Academy of moral and political sciences on the eve of the crucial events of 1848: *Disegno di una storia delle scienze filosofiche in Italia dal Risorgimento delle lettere sin oggi* (it also appeared as a summary in Naples in 1847). A prominent exponent of Neapolitan liberal culture, in his *Disegno* Bozzelli presents an enquiry on the conditions suited to foster the rise of philosophy and the formation and development of philosophical systems, in correlation with the development of societies. The work begins by observing that searching for true doctrines in the history of philosophy – doctrines,

that is, truly capable of conveying the meaning of life and reality – might seem like a desperate enterprise; indeed, in the course of history, doctrines mostly tend to overcome one another, and no philosopher is willing to sacrifice his own position and honestly examine himself in depth. The main way of avoiding the struggle between philosophies is to have recourse to experience. But this criterion, which is used abundantly in the sciences, seems foreign to philosophy, which still progresses by means of imaginary doctrines (*Disegno di una storia delle scienze filosofiche*, pp. 5–6).

After this prologue, one might expect a presentation of those philosophies which could avoid being reduced to the status of endlessly conflicting fantasies. But Bozzelli provides us instead with a brief description of Greek philosophy, from the poetic age to Aristotle, with a focus on the Italian school, merely touching on the fundamental problem. Pythagoras is described as a philosopher concerned with giving philosophical investigation concreteness (p. 6). The philosophies which he considers to be the most abstract and the most distant from experience are those of the Eleatics and Plato. Aristotle rehabilitated experience, although not completely (p. 20). The description of the various philosophies stops here, however. In order to outline a theory of the dynamics of philosophies in history, Bozzelli also gives philosophies and philosophers the task of providing answers to the demands of the people, showing them ways out of the unjust situations that oppress them (p. 22). The last short section of the *Disegno* is devoted to Italy: here Bozzelli briefly depicts the concepts of the philosophers who, from the age of the Renaissance onwards, have most influenced historical and social development. He believes the most vigorous reflection is that which flourished in Southern Italy with figures like Bruno, Telesio, Campanella, Vico, and Gravina (pp. 25–26).

Much younger than Bozzelli, Francesco Bertinaria (1816–1892) studied at the University of Pisa, where he had contact with Silvestro Centofanti, before moving to Turin in order to work with the publisher Pomba and undertake an academic career (in 1860 he succeeded Mamiani to the chair of the philosophy of history at the University of Turin, and in 1865 he was called to the University of Genoa). In Turin he edited the Italian translation of Karl Ludwig Kannegieszer's *Abriss der Geschichte der philosophie* (Leipzig, 1837), adding considerations on Oriental and Italian philosophy which were modelled on Poli's *Supplimenti*. This work convinced him that Italian philosophy did not deserve to be neglected as foreign scholars did, since it had made significant achievements during the Renaissance, and during the Enlightenment it had striven to enable Italy to regain its place among the more advanced philosophical nations. On the other hand, he was convinced that during the age of the Restoration this tendency to interrelate on equal terms had continued: Bertinaria believed that Rosmini managed to overcome empiricism and rationalism without falling into the eclecticism propounded by Poli (C.L. Kannegieszer, *Compendio della storia della filosofia*, translated from German and enlarged by doctor F. Bertinaria (Turin, Pomba, 1843), 'Appendice', p. 278).

Bertinaria paralleled Bozzelli's considerations with a more substantial work entitled *Sull'indole e le vicende della filosofia italiana* (Turin, Pomba, 1846), which appeared originally as an entry in the *Nuova enciclopedia popolare* (Turin, Pomba,

1846–1849, in 14 tomes, followed by many new editions). In this work, Italian philosophy is considered to have a “synthetic” value, since in the course of its history it has shown the tendency to harmonise contrasting positions, to preserve the most solid doctrines, and update them according to the development of thought in other nations (*Sull'indole*, p. 102). Italian philosophy therefore was never entirely subject to the positions held by others and, above all, it never knew the exaggerations cultivated in other nations, thus avoiding materialism, scepticism, or mysticism (pp. 53–60). In the age of the Pythagoreans, Italian thinkers were already busy curbing the tendency to formulate speculative abstractions and always took into consideration the rights of the individual. In Rome philosophy was practised only because it helped to clarify people's rights: “If Greece provided Rome with science, Rome provided Greek science with man”. Thanks to the preservation of the Pythagorean tradition, Italy was not damaged by the darkness of medieval thought (pp. 7–9). The Renaissance was the age that saw the strongest presence of Italy in a European context, but what prevailed here too was the “synthetic” character. The dominant tendency, however, was experimentalism: the starting point was a kind of Aristotelianism renewed in an almost experimental direction, as in the case of Pomponazzi; it continued with Telesio's sensationalism, and finally reached Campanella, who concluded the cycle of the visible “primacy” of Italy among the philosophical nations (pp. 28–29).

The crisis of Italian philosophy during the age of the Counter-Reformation is interpreted by Bertinaria as a period in which the fundamental elements of philosophy were recovered; they emerge again in fact without influencing the speculation elaborated in the other nations, thus enabling Italian philosophy become authoritative again. Far from indicating Bruno and Campanella as precursors of modern thought, and Vico as a precursor of Kant and idealism, Bertinaria believes Vico's greatness lies in his ability to revive ancient Pythagoreanism and relate it to the new directives given by science (pp. 42–51). He exalts Vico as the philosopher of human experience and praises the moderate Enlightenment thinkers (Muratori, Gerdil) as exponents of the moral current. With the advent of sensationalism and Kantianism, modern thought seems to become predominant in Italy; but, for Bertinaria, this is merely outward appearance for Italian philosophy proved it was capable of rejecting these two excessive currents (pp. 64–69). It was Kantian subjectivism above all which was unable to take root in a “synthetic” philosophical tradition. Subsequently, in his period of teaching in Genoa, Bertinaria approached German philosophy and underwent a notable conversion. Bertinaria was reproached by Mamiani, whose theories he had initially accepted, for changing his positions. After a prolonged collaboration with *La Filosofia delle Scuole Italiane* (the journal founded and directed by Mamiani), Bertinaria became irritated by the clearly Platonic evolution of Mamiani, as is evident from his article ‘Il problema critico esaminato dalla filosofia trascendente’, FSI, XI (1880), vol. xxii, pp. 241–270.

After Bozzelli and Bertinaria with their clearly national concern, we cannot forget another thinker from Tuscany who was interested in studying the “temperament” of Italian thought: Silvestro Centofanti, a typical representative of a rhetorical and academic culture. Born in Calci (Pisa) in 1794, he held the chair of the history

of philosophy at the University of Pisa from 1841 to 1849. From here he imparted teachings imbued with patriotic sentiment which rested more on incentive than on real historiographical research. He devoted himself not only to philosophy but also to Greek literature and poetry. Centofanti had been educated in Florence in circles close to the Gabinetto Vieusseux. Once appointed to teach at the University of Pisa, he delivered several successful inaugural lectures, in which he addressed questions relating to the Italian philosophical tradition: the untitled inaugural lecture he held in 1842 contained several observations on Italian thought; in 1844 he dealt with the theme *Del platonismo in Italia* (Pisa, 1844); in 1845, he published reflections from his courses in a number of essays entitled *Sulla verità delle cognizioni umane e sulla filosofia della storia* (Pisa, 1845); and in 1846 he held a lecture entitled *Prelezione alla storia della filosofia italiana dai principi del secolo decimottavo fino ai tempi presenti* (Pisa, 1846). He devoted several lectures to the history of Italian literature, to Dante, Galileo, and Campanella in particular. Particularly noteworthy are the *Saggio critico su Pitagora* (Pisa, 1845), later included in *La letteratura greca dalle sue origini fino alla caduta di Costantinopoli, con uno Studio su Pitagora* (Florence, 1870), and the *Saggio sulla vita e sulle opere di Plutarco* (Florence, 1845). He died in 1880.

Centofanti's definition of philosophy and the history of philosophy evokes both Vico and Condorcet, since it refers to "a severe and positive idea, like the necessity of nature", which is "full of life" and evolves following the principle of "perfectibility" (*Prolusione letta il 28 febbraio 1842* (Pisa, 1842), pp. 21–22). He believed that the history of philosophy was neither the history of the sciences nor of particular fields of knowledge, but the history of "philosophical universal reason" underlying all human doctrine, namely "the word of Wisdom" which is at the basis of "the whole human civilising process" (pp. 3–6). This wisdom, which explains civilisation, was disclosed by Italian speculation, and Italy has always had a special speculative vocation (p. 29). Now, however, modern philosophies seem to prevail. For Centofanti, this apparent supremacy in the domain of the "philosophical universal reason" is related to the creation of rational worlds by the German thinkers which are totally removed from reality (*Sulla verità delle cognizioni umane*, pp. 39–40). This tendency must be opposed by Italian thinkers, who should contrast the boldness of the "ontologists" (as Centofanti calls the German transcendentalist philosophers) with the truth of gradual intellectual advances guided by experience. Centofanti views Galileo as the paradigm of a way of studying nature that leads speculation to dominate reality again and to enable humanity to take really important steps forward. With Galileo Italian primacy in the field of the sciences was restored and ancient Pythagoreanism was revived in its authentic central ideas ('Pitagora', in *La letteratura greca* (Florence, 1870), pp. 419–420). Hence Centofanti also recognises Pythagoreanism as the fundamental inspiration for the Italian philosophical tradition, and in his *Del platonismo in Italia* he contrasts Greek thought (characterised by the predominance of an ideal and abstract element) with Italian thought, which originates with Pythagoreanism, develops within the Roman civilisation, and is connoted by the primacy of practical knowledge.

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6.1 Baldassarre Poli (1795–1883)

Supplimenti al Manuale della storia della filosofia di Guglielmo Tennemann

6.1.1 Baldassarre Poli was born in Cremona on 5th September, 1795. After graduating in law from the University of Bologna, he devoted himself to teaching and in 1820 he was appointed teacher of philosophy at the Porta Nuova secondary school in Milan. In 1837 he obtained the chair of “theoretical and practical philosophy” (a discipline that included the history of philosophy) at the University of Padua, new which he communicated to Victor Cousin in a letter dated 18th September of the same year (Mastellone, pp. 142–143). A “conscientious officer” and an “observant Catholic” (Groppali, *Baldassarre Poli*, p. 544), he remained outside the Risorgimento movement; in 1852, during the repression perpetrated by the police under the authority of the Austrian government, he was appointed director general of the gymnasias in Veneto. In 1857 he became school councillor and inspector general in the Lieutenancy of Milan. In 1859, when Austrian rule in Lombardy came to an end, he resigned from service and continued to write philosophical works in support of a synthesis of rationalism and empiricism, which he had already put forward in his *Supplimenti*. He died in Milan on 28th March, 1883.

6.1.2 In Milan, Sonzogno published Poli's *Saggio filosofico sopra la scuola de' moderni filosofi naturalisti, coll'analisi dell'organologia, della craniologia, della fisiognomonia, della psicologia comparata, e con una teorica delle idee e dei sentimenti* (1827) and his *Saggio d'un corso di filosofia* (1828–1832, 4 vols). The most noteworthy of his works were his annotations to the Italian version of Tennemann's *Grundriss* (*Manuale della storia della filosofia di Guglielmo Tennemann tradotto da Francesco Longhena, con Note e Supplimenti dei professori Giandomenico Romagnosi e Baldassarre Poli*, Milan, Fontana, 1832, vols I-II) and above all the four *Supplimenti* to this textbook (vols III-IV, *ibid.*, 1836: the title page attributes the *Supplimenti* to Romagnosi, but in fact they are the work of Poli alone). Here we use the 1836 edition of the *Supplimenti*, and for the notes by Poli and Romagnosi in vols I-II of the *Manuale* the 1855 edition. The *Supplimenti* aroused the interest of scholars mainly because it includes a vast description of Italian thought, from the Pythagoreans up to contemporary writers. In Padua, Poli published the *Elementi di filosofia teoretica e morale* (1837, 2nd ed. 1844). Worth mentioning are also his *Studii di filosofia contemporanea* (Milan, 1879–1880), a collection of the memoirs he presented to the *Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere*.

6.1.3 In his lengthy introduction to the *Supplimenti* (*Manuale*, III, pp. VII-L), Poli declares that he intends to compensate for the deficiencies of Tennemann's text book, not only with respect to Indian, Chinese, and Persian thinkers, but also the latest developments of thought in England, Scotland, Ireland, and France. As for Italy, Poli believes that the situation is even more defective, since Tennemann had limited himself to mentioning Vico and Genovesi. Hence his decision not to write a mere integration (as Modena had already done in his *Supplimenti*) but a complete history of Italian philosophy, from the origins to the contemporary age, thus carrying out a project he had long cherished (III, pp. VII-IX). This work is therefore a "particular history" of philosophical thought, whose relation to "universal history" is explained as follows: "The universal history of philosophy contains all special and particular histories of the various philosophies of the world, so that the constant reappearance or renewal of the latter enables us to predetermine the laws and vicissitudes of the former" (III, p. XVIII). In this way Poli also intended to correct Tennemann's historiographical method, which was openly Kantian. Indeed, the German scholar had identified some great systems through which the human spirit had expressed itself, indicating Kant's critical philosophy as the only philosophy capable of judging the various speculative positions which had followed on from one another up until that time. On the contrary, Poli maintained the possibility of initiating a conciliative method that could preserve the elements of truth present in each of the great systems and at the same time oppose (in addition to "exclusivism") the real sources of error, namely, materialism, scepticism, and atheism. "Truth requires the absolute" Poli reiterates towards the end of the *Supplimenti*, "and there must only be one true philosophy; but who can boast that he has discovered the whole of it and has reduced it to a system which is to be indisputably believed or universally applied?" (IV, p. 891). By reconstructing the history of Italian philosophy with the eclectic or "conciliative" method inspired by Cousin, Poli intended therefore to integrate the historiographical framework used by Tennemann: a fourth system, Eclecticism, must be added to the three great systems, Empiricism or Sensationalism, Idealism or Rationalism, and Supernaturalism or Mysticism. This scheme is applied to the history of Italian philosophy, but for Poli it is also appropriate for the general history of philosophy which, if adequately explored, can indicate Eclecticism as a system reconciling the different metaphysical positions.

Poli acknowledges that not all thinkers focused their attention on the compatibility of the philosophical systems, and we cannot blame them for holding on to 'exclusive' systems. Yet, there is no denying that some philosophers maintained the possibility of reconciling the dualism between empiricism and rationalism, to which the great diversity of systems can be reduced, since Supernaturalism often corresponds to the translation of religious aspiration into speculative aspiration. Everyone will agree, Poli affirms at the beginning of his *Supplimenti*, that in the various epochs of philosophy, besides the great manifestations of empiricism and rationalism, "there existed another which was no less persistent and universal than these and had as its object the union or approximation between these two principles or systems, and that there has always been some room left for this third or last one,

after the other two had become, so to speak, exhausted and worn-out in all their possible forms" (III, p. XIII). Poli defines genuine eclecticism as follows, therefore: "The system of the two principles of Empiricism and Rationalism, namely Empiricism-Rationalism as the sole and universal system" (III, p. xv).

Poli sees the historical progression of philosophy as a contrast between the needs of empiricism and the needs of rationalism, which the general tendency of eclecticism incessantly tries to remedy, albeit never completely succeeding, so provoking the constant reappearance of the previous tendencies. These tendencies have emerged everywhere from the very beginning of the history of philosophy. Even in Indian thought, observes Poli following Cousin, it is possible to identify "the great questions and the same systems elaborated on the basis of *Empiricism*, *Rationalism*, *Supernaturalism*, and *Eclecticism*, that is to say, on the principles of authority and reason". But it is no wonder: "Philosophical systems are *universal* for human reason, [...] they expand as much as reason itself does: hence the existence not only of a *particular* history, but also of another *universal* or *ideal* history of philosophy" (III, p. xxv). Yet, for Poli, scepticism should not be considered one of the general systems, even though Tennemann's textbook takes it into consideration and Cousin counts it as one of the four standard systems. In Poli's view, within the general economy there is no room left for a "system" of scepticism, since the concept of the exhaustion of the opposition between empiricism and rationalism is enough to describe the moments of difficulty experienced by philosophical knowledge, which are often amended by the conciliative tendency; not even scepticism in a technical sense, as a system which actually established itself, can be found in the course of Italian philosophy (III, p. xviii).

For Poli, the proper object of the history of philosophy cannot correspond to the object of literary, civic, or universal history, or that of the philosophy of history; he is also convinced that the progress of Italian philosophy should not be examined using Tennemann's framework. Our purpose should therefore be to trace a history of Italian thought understood as "an element of human reason" and at the same time a history of the thought which actually developed in the Italian peninsula. Hence the "real, positive, and experimental" history of Italian philosophers intertwines with the "ideal or typical" history of Italian philosophy. This ideal or typical history is identified as the discovery of the laws which have guided the speculative development of the Italian nation and therefore represent the peculiarity of Italian philosophy, which during the eighteenth century was not well understood by either the German Jakob Brucker or the Italian Appiano Buonafede, who did not pay enough attention to the remote origins and was too enthusiastic about the innovators (III, pp. xxxv-xxxvii). Undertaking this history, which consists of looking for "the dominant philosophical thought of the Italians through the various internal and external circumstances during which it became manifest" (III, p. xl), Poli declares that he will adopt the following procedure: elaborate a "philosophical" history; study the authentic sources concerning the origins of Italian philosophy; publish the sources regarding Scholastic thought, which are for the most part still unpublished; separate the history of philosophy from the history of the different experimental sciences; divide this history into epochs; emphasize the mutual influences between Italian

philosophy and the philosophies of foreign countries; and pay particular attention to civic and literary events in outlining the “external” history. By applying these criteria we will obtain an “ideal or typical” history of philosophy, which should consist of the “discovery of the right determination” of “a law necessary to philosophical thought considered as a product of human reason” (III, p. XLI).

To conclude this presentation of the fundamental ideas of the *Supplimenti* we must point out that the relationship between Poli and the writer who was his source of inspiration, namely Cousin, was somewhat unclear. Poli claimed the chronological primacy and theoretical distinctiveness of his philosophical position, separating “Italian universal eclecticism” (of which he declared himself to be the spokesman) not only from Neoplatonic syncretism and Scholastic eclecticism (“in which a reconciliation between Plato and Aristotle was attempted”), but also from “French or Cousinian modern” eclecticism, because, “with respect to the latter”, we can observe a mutual difference in time, origin, nature, and principles” (IV, p. 769). The first distinguishing element was the date of birth. According to Poli, “Italian universal Eclecticism” dates from the years 1823 and 1826, whereas Cousin’s eclecticism became widespread in France only from 1828, when his *Cours de philosophie* was published. Poli observes that in 1823 the journal *L’Ape Italiana* had already published an abstract of his speech *Intorno al vero e giusto spirito filosofico*, in which he had affirmed that “the studious youth should hold to *Empiricism* and *Rationalism* in philosophy, which, if well combined, lead to a true and reasonable *Eclecticism*”. Poli did not take into account here the philosophical orientation the young Cousin had already manifested before 1820: in his *Discours prononcé à l’ouverture du cours, le 4 décembre 1817: De la philosophie au XIX^e siècle*, Cousin had distanced himself from “that blind syncretism which had been the ruin of the school of Alexandria and which tried to forcibly draw together systems that are opposed to one another”, and he had become the promoter of an “enlightened eclecticism, which, judges all schools with equity and benevolence and borrows the true elements and disregards the false elements they possess”, then identifies this eclecticism with “the true historical method”. In his preface to the *Fragments philosophiques* (1826), moreover, Cousin observes that, towards the end of 1818, his system (namely “an impartial eclecticism applied to the facts of consciousness”) had already been outlined (cf. Piaia, *B. Poli e l’Ecllettismo*, pp. 271–272).

We must note here that philosophical eclecticism – regardless of its remotest manifestations – had been widely practised in Germany during the eighteenth century, by historians of philosophy in particular: it is enough to mention the emphasis placed by Brucker, which both Poli and Cousin were perfectly aware of, on the distinction between syncretism and eclecticism. This meant that nothing radically new appeared in Italy and France in the 1820s. As for Poli, he affirms that “Italian universal eclecticism [...] has always been forecast, although never formulated by our philosophers, from the ancient Pythagoreans up until today, while Cousin’s eclecticism originated directly from Hegelianism or from the philosophical School of Berlin” (IV, p. 769). These two forms of eclecticism also differed on a theoretical plane: “*Cousinian* eclecticism considers philosophy as something already created and existing in the systems that are known, whereas *Italian* eclecticism maintains

that philosophy is still to be created. [...] Cousinian eclecticism regards all systems as true, Italian eclecticism regards them all as false and imperfect. [...] Italian eclecticism awakens the aspiration to an absolute and *conclusive* reform of philosophy, while Cousinian eclecticism seeks to reconcile them all. Italian eclecticism presumes that novelty and originality are possible [...], whereas Cousinian eclecticism offers nothing other than a mere recurrence or reproduction of constantly identical systems" (*Manuale*, IV, pp. 770–771). The aim of this meticulous comparison is to claim the theoretical primacy of Italian eclecticism, although Poli then candidly admits that "the Italian eclecticism practised nowadays is far from that maturity and greatness which it might attain"; as it has not yet reached its fulfilment it "cannot present itself as a philosophy which is quite satisfactory and can serve as a valid support to oppose the systems that are already substantiated by custom" (IV, pp. 765 and 772).

6.1.4 *Supplimenti al Manuale della storia della filosofia di Guglielmo Tennemann*

6.1.4.1 Poli's four *Supplimenti* are made up of the following sections: i. "Indian, Chinese, and Persian philosophers" (III, pp. 1–78), where most space is devoted to Indian thought (III, pp. 3–58); ii. "English, Scottish, and Irish philosophers" (III, pp. 79–128); and iii. "French modern philosophers" (III, pp. 129–282). The fourth *Supplimento*, which amounts to 612 pages, is devoted to the "Italian philosophers" (III, pp. 283–480; IV, pp. 481–894) and is structured in the form of a general history of philosophy. This takes up 306 of the 480 paragraphs into which the two volumes of the *Supplimenti* are subdivided, and these paragraphs are defined as the "continuation" of paragraph 418 of volume II of the *Manuale*, where Tennemann had mentioned Italian philosophers. It is followed by a table of contents of the *Supplimenti* (IV, pp. 895–898), a list of *errata*, a "Chronological table of the history of philosophy after Thales" (IV, pp. 901–920), which goes up to the death of Hegel, and an index of names relating to the whole *Manuale* (IV, pp. 921–947).

6.1.4.2 Poli divides the historical course of Italian philosophy into five epochs: i. "Ancient, middle, and new Pythagoreans", including the Neoplatonists and the Gnostics (this tripartition seems to be modelled on the traditional subdivision of the Platonic Academy into old, middle, and new); the "ancient" Pythagorean school goes up to the age of Aristotle; the "middle" Pythagorean school extends to the Christian era; and the "new" Pythagorean school, that of the 'neo-Pythagoreans', develops during the first four centuries of the Christian era; ii. "Roman Philosophers"; iii. "Italian Scholastic Philosophers" (from Boethius and Cassiodorus up to the Aristotelians and Platonists of the later sixteenth century); iv. "Philosophers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" up to 1815; and v. "Italian Philosophers after the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century", subdivided into "Negative Eclectics" (Galluppi) and "Positive Eclectics" or "Rationalists-Empiricists" (Mancino and Poli), then "Empiricists" (Gioia, Romagnosi, Borrelli, Mamiani), "Rationalists or Idealists" (Rosmini), and "Supernaturalists" (Manzoni, Vincenzo Palmieri, Antonio Riccardi, Gioacchino Ventura).

6.1.4.3 The first manifestations of philosophy in Italy are to be found in the doctrines of the Pythagoreans, who were active in Magna Graecia. According to Poli, Pythagoreanism had genuinely Italian origins and therefore presents its own distinctive features (III, pp. 288–290). Pythagoras was a merely symbolic figure, whereas the Pythagorean schools of Crotona, Taranto, and other towns in southern Italy actually existed. Pythagoreanism is characterised by a sort of esoteric and metaphysical (but not mystical) knowledge that differentiates it from Ionian thought and it should not be considered as a derivation from Oriental wisdom; for this reason, Poli rejects the tradition (admitted by Brucker) that the Italian school was related to Pythagoras' travels in the East and he regards it as mythical (III, pp. 306–307 and 309–310; on Brucker, see *Models*, II, p. 539). From Italy Pythagoreanism spread throughout the Mediterranean and had a considerable influence in Greece, in particular on the Socratic schools (III, p. 313). Ancient Pythagoreanism had an eclectic character, and from the very beginning Italian thought adopted a conciliative approach, understood as an inclination towards the comprehension and coexistence of antagonistic doctrines (III, pp. 319–321). Following Poli's interpretation, therefore, the school of the Pythagoreans became the archetype of the schools which aimed at a synthesis of the real and ideal elements of the world. Numbers were neither principles nor real elements of things, but only signs and symbols of these elements. In Poli's view, the symbol represents an ideal, suprasensible reality; hence number is nothing but the "idea" understood as a rational principle and then realized in the sensible world through mathematical relations and geometric figures (III, p. 334).

Ancient Pythagoreanism originated the schools of Elea, Agrigento, and Megara. The latter developed in Greece, but resulted from the evolution of Pythagorean philosophy in an exaggeratedly dialectical direction. According to Poli, the Eleatic school was inclined toward idealism because it maintained an absolute spiritual unity, foreign to multiplicity (III, pp. 343–344). The school of Agrigento revealed instead the influence of empiricism; with Empedocles, it admitted the plurality of the "roots" of things and, with Gorgias, it maintained the inability to express a positive notion of reality (III, pp. 359–363). The sophistic positions of Melissus and Gorgias derived from an exceptional development of the rationalism of Zeno and Xenophanes and did not foreshadow scepticism (as Tennemann believed: see *Manuale*, ed. of 1855, I, p. 102), but merely represent an excess in the transition from original eclecticism to rationalism and empiricism, which are now taught and maintained separately (III, pp. 363–366). Poli underlines the decisive influence of ancient Pythagoreanism on Greek thought, in particular on Heraclitus, atomism, and Anaxagoras; but he goes further with his theory of the "primacy" of the Italian school, ascribing the development of the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle in a great measure to the influence of Pythagoreanism. Platonic idealism and the view of the One are of Pythagorean origin, as are the main doctrines formulated by Aristotle, in particular that of form and prime matter (III, pp. 367–369).

"Middle" Pythagoreanism tended towards empiricism and was represented by figures such as the poet Ennius, Cato the Elder, and Nigidius Figulus. "New" Pythagoreanism on the other hand underwent an evolution in a mystical or

supernaturalistic direction, which remained moderate in Quintus Sextius but indulged in symbolistic eccentricities and magical deviations outside Italy, with Apollonius of Tyana, Moderatus of Gades, and Secundus the Athenian. Poli thus comments on the profound difference between ancient and new Pythagoreanism: "The science of numbers of the *ancient Pythagoreans* was intended to express the forms and analogies of things and not to create a mysterious and mystical language, as was the case with the *neo-Pythagoreans*" (III, p. 391). The esoteric tendency of neo-Pythagorean supernaturalism spread to the schools which derived from it: Neoplatonism and Gnosticism. In this way Poli was able to superimpose the evolution of the Pythagorean school onto the philosophy of the Romans. Neo-Pythagoreanism, Neoplatonism, and Gnosticism are Italian phenomena because they took place in Rome partly during the imperial age (III, p. 435).

As for Roman philosophy strictly speaking, Poli makes a different analysis, which he elaborates separately. Following Vico's *De antiquissima Italorum sapientia*, he puts forward the hypothesis that Rome witnessed a series of philosophical schools (perhaps with a jurisprudential character) which preceded the influence of middle Pythagoreanism. He believed that one of the most important tasks for the history of Italian philosophy therefore was to "research or deduce the first philosophy of the Romans" from the monuments of their jurisprudence and their language (III, p. 440). The study of the juridical terms and the ancient Latin language (which had already been suggested by Vico) could bring to light the traces of the doctrines elaborated by the Romans regarding suprasensible beings. Poli then comes to a conclusion which lacks a certain balance: "These brief notes concerning the philosophical thoughts of the Latins or Romans, deduced from their remotest voices, reveal that they, by nature and character, and also according to their origin, are really *Pythagorean*. If they show any affinity and resemblance with some philosophy, this philosophy must necessarily be *Pythagoreanism*, which taught the spirituality of beings or metaphysical beings, that is, God, the One, species or forms, the soul as distinct from the body" (III, pp. 443–444). According to Poli, the thought of Roman jurists was not inspired by Stoicism: it is instead spiritualistic thought, "a practical continuation of *ancient Pythagoreanism*" (III, p. 460). But the Pythagorean inspiration was disregarded by the subsequent Roman thinkers (Cicero, Lucretius, Seneca), who followed Greek philosophy in an eclectic way. However, it cannot be denied that Roman thought, whether it drew directly from original Pythagoreanism or it proposed itself as a philosophy reconciling the different tendencies deriving from Greek thought, revealed itself to be in agreement with the lesson of the ancient Pythagoreans (III, pp. 478–479).

As for the third epoch of Italian philosophy, Poli states that "although the names have changed, Italian Scholasticism represents nothing other than a re-emergence or a continuation of ancient Pythagoreanism combined with Theology and the science of Religion" (III, pp. XLIV–XLV). Some historians have mistakenly given Scholasticism a "merely dialectic or theological" character, connecting it closely to Peripateticism (III, p. 480). True Scholasticism restores all fundamental systems; in particular it affirms the importance of that eclectic synthesis originally outlined by the Pythagoreans. Poli makes every effort to demonstrate this assumption by

referring to the usual three-fold division of Scholasticism: he stresses the importance of the earliest period from Boethius to the age of Charlemagne, and considers the thirteenth century to be the culminating phase; the period of decline goes from the time from St Thomas Aquinas to Galileo, that is to say, the age of later Scholasticism and Renaissance Peripateticism. Poli is thus opposed to the trend followed by Tennemann himself, who had described the Renaissance as the “beginning” of modern philosophy in the introduction to the third part of his textbook (cf. ed. of 1855, II, paragraphs 275–304, pp. 1–47). For Poli, the distinctive Italian character of Scholastic philosophy is its assimilation and development of Platonic and Pythagorean elements; when this characteristic disappears, he loses interest in the development of Renaissance philosophy.

For Poli, however, the really problematical point is the fact that the appearance of philosophy in Italy during the Middle Ages took place as a result of the impulse of that part of Patristic thought that was dominated by the heresies inspired by Neoplatonism, and there is, therefore, a wrong way of spreading Pythagorean spiritualism. He does not accept the fundamental theory of the Platonism of the Church Fathers and tends to consider the Fathers as essentially Christian thinkers and theologians and only secondarily as thinkers influenced by Platonism (ed. of 1836, IV, pp. 484–485). By affirming that a Christian or Catholic philosophy has never existed, Poli distances himself from a philosophical evaluation of most of the Greek and Latin Patristic thinkers, beginning with St Augustine (whom he only briefly mentions). Scholasticism therefore only derived directly from Patristics in some cases: it is not an expression of Christian philosophy because it made use of different philosophical sources. Poli thus presents a rather singular interpretation, which seems to be a reversal of the reading once offered by Cousin: Italian Scholasticism should be regarded on one hand by taking into consideration its internal part, made up of fundamental and systematic doctrines and, on the other, by considering its external part, mere outward appearance, which can be deduced from the form in which its doctrines were formulated and expressed. “The former, as we shall see, is entirely *Platonic* or *Pythagorean*, the latter *Aristotelian* or *Peripatetic*. The former can be reduced to a few primary and fundamental principles, the latter to the two principles of Aristotle’s *authority* and *dialectic*, from which the *Aristotle-mania* derives” (IV, p. 487).

Poli therefore distinguishes between the principles and the formulation of the Scholastic doctrines and tries to save some of the positions adopted by Italian Scholasticism, with the traditional contempt on the logical and dialectic formulas it was filled with. As for its principles, Scholasticism was for the most part supernaturalistic, but it manifested itself in the language of logic: this resulted in it accepting Aristotelian philosophy as a whole, on the basis of the principle of authority (IV, pp. 488–490). Only a few of the Scholastic philosophers were able to connect the Aristotelian system to their fundamental doctrines, which were Platonic: the surface usually remained Aristotelian, whereas the main concepts, at times Platonic and at times Pythagorean, had difficulty in emerging. After the first essentially theological phase, Scholastic thought became metaphysical and centred upon the notion of being, showing the decisive influence of Pythagoreanism. Despite all appearances,

in developing the themes of prime matter and form, they followed Plato. The most profound evolution concerned the concepts of entelechy and substance and the enunciation of the principle of individuation. These doctrines had been formulated by Aristotle, but their origin was basically a Pythagorean and Platonic; hence, although the technical language of the Scholastics was Aristotelian, in practice their concepts were in agreement with the Italian tradition (IV, pp. 491–494).

The supernaturalistic tendency of Italian medieval thought, initiated by Boethius and developed by Anselm of Aosta and Peter Lombard, established itself with Bonaventure of Bagnoregio and even more with Thomas Aquinas. Poli is not particularly enthusiastic about Aquinas, but acknowledges that his supernaturalism enabled him to make important developments to the knowledge of God and the human soul. He believes that Aquinas' interpretation of the agent intellect as a mere faculty of the individual soul is correct and, although it contrasts with the Platonic point of view, it sheds light on a field – exegesis of *De anima* – where many excesses had been reached (IV, pp. 520–521). With Aquinas, Italian supernaturalism reached a general position which aimed at a reconciliation between reason and faith, thus bringing about an “extension of the arts” (IV, pp. 532–533). The reaction against Thomistic supernaturalism corresponded to the appearance of empiricism, which manifested itself through the naturalism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which was Averroistic in nature. Poli illustrates at length the positions of Nicolò Leonico Tomeo, Pomponazzi, Achillini, and Nifo, who are all considered as “empiricists”, due in particular to the fact that they made use of a direct explanation of natural events. This phase of Scholastic thought seems to him to be more interesting than that characterised by supernaturalism. He is particularly attracted by the sixteenth-century Peripatetics like Zabarella and Cremonini, and by “irregular” thinkers such as Vanini, Nizolio, and Aconcio, who were pervaded by critical spirit. Poli contrasts these “empiricists” to the “rationalism” of Ficino, Pico, Cardano, and Telesio (whose thought combined rationalism and sensationalism: IV, pp. 584–588). Francesco Patrizi expounded a Platonic doctrine of considerable importance, partly linked to transcendence and partly emanatistic, with which he attacked the authority of Aristotle. As for Bruno, despite his disordered life and studies, he elaborated a spiritual pantheistic doctrine, and he was a genius who revived Pythagoreanism and Eleaticism (IV, pp. 598–599). In contrast, sixteenth-century Italian philosophy did not produce any voice in the field of supernaturalism, except for Cornelius Agrippa (who is surprisingly included in Italian philosophy), and Franciscus Georgius Venetus. A position which seems to be more balanced than supernaturalism is that of the eclectics, including cardinal Bessarion and Jacopo Mazzoni. Poli then describes the evolution of Aristotelian dialectic in Scholastic philosophy; in this context, there is a lengthy presentation of the thought of Lull (also included in the history of Italian philosophy), which ends by stating that the *ars magna* was totally artificial (IV, pp. 613–615).

Philosophical renewal started to emerge with the empiricism of Campanella, who was also a metaphysician and therefore a rationalist for whom knowledge is not only based on the foundations of experience, but derives from God the Creator and a metaphysical order resting on the powers, or primalities, of Being. Galileo

took up the Pythagorean exhortation to read philosophy from the great book of the universe, which is written in a mathematical language; however, he did not complete the philosophical renewal: Gassendi, Descartes, and Locke were in practice more “revolutionary” (IV, pp. 636–637). Indeed, Poli distinguishes between the effectiveness of Galileo’s physical investigations and his philosophy as a whole, which did not produce fruitful developments. In Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this gave rise to a moderate spread of empiricism, thanks to Locke and Condillac rather than local experimentalists and empiricists. Poli specifies the names and doctrines of the several exponents of Italian and French empiricism, although he observes that there were no great personalities among them. The eighteenth century finally saw the victory of Soave’s sensationalism, which was moderate and therefore more generally accepted. “His negative advances cleaned philosophy from its Scholastic defects, as he reduced the Empiricism of Locke, Condillac, and Destutt de Tracy and brought it to its utmost simplicity and, what is more, constantly combined it with Spiritualism, as a result of a successful inconsequence or contradiction, and finally he strongly opposed the Transcendentalism of Kant and the most enthusiastic idealists, especially in his later years” (IV, pp. 666–667).

Vico “belonged to the Eclectics as an Empiricist and Rationalist, both owing to his method and to the foundation underlying his doctrines, which raise themselves to a rational-empirical system of philosophy based on reason and history”. The “empiricism and rationalism” of this Neapolitan thinker consisted in his uniting criticism and topic, that is to say, philosophy and the authority of history (IV, pp. 700 and 705–706). Poli makes Vico the philosopher of common sense, that is, the philosopher of a universal awareness not only of what is true but also of what is verisimilar. “To this end, Vico had recourse to *metaphysics* assisted by facts, that is, by history and philology; so, after outlining his *history* with mind and reason, like a copy of the invisible creation, he confirmed it with experience, to conclude that what he had thought was truth and certainty in fact too, that is, true science” (IV, p. 722). For Poli, Vico was an original thinker, whose greatness was immediately recognised, although none of his immediate disciples were able to equal him. Genovesi’s philosophical position indicates that, thanks to the impulse given by Vico, Italian thought came forward in support of the new eclecticism; however, Poli also acknowledges that empiricism continued to be considerably influential and, in its struggle against rationalism and supernaturalism, tended to ignore the conciliative approach. The Italian eclectic school, however, prevailed over empiricism, thus inaugurating a new era. The Italians certainly received encouragement from French philosophy, which had abandoned sensationalism, but they also turned to the reminiscences of ancient Italian philosophy (IV, pp. 750–752). Sympathy for eclecticism was manifest above all in Galluppi, whom Poli holds in high esteem, even though he does not think that his position constitutes a decisive step in the establishment of

conciliative philosophy.⁸ In order to obtain this result, Italian thought had to undergo a profound process of maturation – especially from a methodological point of view – which Poli would like to lead. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, this new tendency still proceeded side by side with thinkers related to empiricism, such as Gioia, Romagnosi, Borrelli, and Mamiani himself. The rationalist thinkers began to emerge too, with Rosmini standing out, whereas, in Poli's view, the strictly supernaturalist thinkers were Gioacchino Ventura and Alessandro Manzoni (IV, p. 862).

6.1.4.4 With the dual aim of integrating Tennemann's textbook and rediscovering the Italian philosophical tradition, Poli made his *Supplimenti* not only a narrative but to some extent also a historical and critical work, something we see in the footnotes in particular. The extensive and frequent use of quotations serves to corroborate the narrative, which is systematically divided into paragraphs. But the stated general aim of identifying an organic connection between the philosophical schools regardless of their different orientations is not always fulfilled, and this is also true for Poli's more strictly historiographical concerns (despite his promises, Poli never provided any Italian medieval philosophical works and made no great effort to study the relations between philosophy and literary culture). The framework of the "four systems", moreover, led him to neglect the contacts which took place historically. The fact that he took eclecticism as a real speculative position, the heir to a centuries-old tradition, was an explicit theoretical stance which should have prevented Poli's 'history' from being merely a work of erudition; but it was precisely his intention to respect the succession of empiricism, rationalism, supernaturalism, and eclecticism that prevented him from adequately grasping the points of contact or of dialectic comparison between the different currents.

6.1.5 Ever since his first period in Milan Poli had been highly esteemed as a scholar in the philosophical field. The publication of the *Supplimenti* aroused considerable interest, but also some criticism. The "manifesto of Italian eclecticism" included in the final part of the *Supplimenti* provoked the irritation of Cousin. In fact, in a letter to Galluppi dated 15th July, 1839, he defined the additions to Tennemann's textbook as "totally lacking in criticism", and even the translation made by Longhena – erroneously ascribed to Poli – was judged to be "very shoddy" (Mastellone, p. 143). Antonio Rosmini also declared that he shared Cousin's judgement, and explicitly formulated his criticism. He devoted a long letter-review to the *Supplimenti*, written in Turin on 6th February 1837, which was published in the same year in the journals *Ricoglitore italiano e straniero* (Milan) and *Progresso delle scienze, delle lettere e delle arti* (Naples). Due to its methodological importance, the letter was reprinted in Rosmini's *Introduzione alla filosofia* (Casale Monferrato, 1850; now in *Opere edite ed inedite di Antonio Rosmini*, vol. II, ed. by P.P. Ottonello, Rome, 1979, pp. 355–363,

⁸ See in particular *Cenni sulle vita e le opere del Barone Pasquale Galluppi* (Padua, 1847, pp. 21 and 25, where Poli presents Galluppi as the inventor of a "third entirely new system", between rationalism and empiricism, and as the man who, in search for the "happy medium", avoided both the mistakes of materialism and the "darkness" of idealism.

which we quote here). This letter-review followed a letter (also written in Turin and dated 26th December, 1836) that Rosmini had sent to Poli to thank him for Tennemann's *Manuale* – which he defined as “a precious gift” – and to ask for permission to publish some of his observations (pp. 354–355; Poli's answer is quoted on p. 449). This was pure criticism, not devoid of irony: the fourth *Supplimento* is judged to be a mere “attempt” to offer a true history of Italian philosophy, which, Rosmini believed, was still a long way off, since it should be able to shed light on “the dangers of the philosophical travels attempted by the human mind, as well as the bold attitudes, the failures, and the successful discoveries”, rather than “throw together great, original men and the common herd of philosophers”. In this way, by failing to distinguish between those who gave order to the “realm of philosophy” and those who on the contrary threw it into confusion, this ‘history’ “does not only reveal itself to be cold and useless, but also detrimental” (p. 356).

Poli did not react to Rosmini's review. However, if we are to be truly impartial, we should point out again that Poli had not written a merely erudite work, since he had used a framework of classification and his reconstruction had been guided by the idea of “universal Eclecticism”. But it is precisely this theoretical structure that Rosmini radically rejected: he believed that in elaborating a classification of philosophers, it is not proper to give them a label they do not identify with, as in the case of Rosmini himself, who discovered that he had been placed among the “Rationalists and Idealists”. As for “universal Eclecticism”, which is based on the union of empiricism and rationalism, it is judged to be logically unsustainable, hence contradictory, and so Poli's position slides into that syncretism that he wished to sharply distance himself from: “Either his Eclecticism goes beyond the phenomenon or it does not. If it goes beyond the phenomenon, there is no longer any Empiricism; if it does not, what is left is only Empiricism without Rationalism. It follows that his Eclecticism is a *Syncretism* that scrapes together conflicting dogmas, and *Syncretism* is nothing” (Rosmini, *Introduzione alla filosofia*, ed. by Ottonello, pp. 362–363).

6.1.6 BFI (1800–1850), pp. 200–201; BFI (1850–1900), p. 432. On Poli's life and his philosophical and historiographical positions: EF, IX, pp. 8751–8752; C. Cantoni, ‘Commemorazione di B. Poli, letta l'8 gennaio 1885’, *Rendiconti del R. Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere*, s. II, vol. XVIII (1885), pp. 32–65 (on this text, see the review by L. Credaro, FSI, XVI (1885), vol. xxxii, pp. 97–98); F. Bonatelli, *Commemorazione del Professore B. Poli letta nella R. Università di Padova il 1° marzo 1885* (Padua, 1885); C. Calzi, ‘B. Poli filosofo cremonese’, *Sapienza*, VIII (1886), vol. xiv, pp. 240–265 and 340–377; G.B. Gerini, *Il pensiero educativo di B. Poli* (Rome, 1908); A. Groppali, ‘B. Poli (1795–1883)’, *Rivista internazionale di filosofia del diritto*, X (1930), pp. 544–550, republished in Id., *Sociologia e diritto* (Milan, 1945); Mastellone, pp. 141–147; Garin, III, pp. 1094–1095; M.L. Soppelsa, ‘Scienze e storia della scienza’, in *Storia della cultura veneta*, VI. *Dall'età napoleonica alla prima guerra mondiale* (Vicenza, 1986), pp. 524–526; G.P. Berti, *Censura e circolazione delle idee nel Veneto della Restaurazione* (Venice, 1989), pp. 444–447; G. Santinello, ‘La presenza del pensiero

di Kant a Padova e B. Poli', in Id., *Tradizione e dissenso nella filosofia veneta* (Padua, 1991), pp. 214–253; L. Malusa, 'La "natura" della filosofia italiana. Note in margine alla storia della filosofia italiana di B. Poli', in *Filosofia, scienza, cultura. Studi in onore di Corrado Dollo*, ed. by G. Bentivegna, S. Burgio, and G. Magnano San Lio (Soveria Mannelli, 2002), pp. 453–495; G.P. Berti, *L'Università di Padova dal 1814 al 1850* (Padua and Treviso, 2011), pp. 283–286; G. Piaia, 'B. Poli e l'Eclettismo fra Italia e Francia' and 'Le lezioni di B. Poli sulla filosofia romana ed alessandrina', in Id., *Le vie dell'innovazione filosofica nel Veneto moderno (1700–1866)* (Padua, 2011), pp. 263–284 and 285–313.

Chapter 7

Galluppi and Rosmini: The History of Philosophy as a Necessary “Complement”



Luciano Malusa

Introduction

(a) *The attitude of the most important Italian thinkers of the early nineteenth century towards the history of philosophy*

The most outstanding philosophers of early nineteenth-century Italy were Pasquale Galluppi, Vincenzo Gioberti, and Antonio Rosmini. Gioberti (1801–1852) did not write any works specifically devoted to the history of philosophy, but his particular interest in reconstructing the course of philosophy emerges on at least two occasions. In the ‘Proemio’ to his *Introduzione allo studio della filosofia* (Brussels, 1839–1840, 2 vols), he declared his intention to apply his “formola ideale” or “ideal formula” (“Being creates the Existent and the Existent returns to Being”) to the history of philosophy. He used this formula to contrast Rosmini’s doctrine of “ideal Being”, a doctrine Gioberti considered to be a remnant of subjectivism and psychologism. He did not intend to apply the formula “by discussing all ages, merely limiting myself to an essay dealing with those systems that flourished in the remotest past” (*Introduzione*, Lausanne, 1846, I, pp. 8 and 11). Gioberti believed that the history of philosophy was particularly significant in the study of the origins of thought because it is from this early thought that true philosophy, the thought of creation, emanated through revelation. As the history of the Mediterranean peoples – the Greeks and the Italics – shows the transmission of a primitive revelation, it is necessary to go back and study the peoples of the East. Philosophy exists, albeit implicitly, in the ancient cosmogonies and sacred visions, it only needs to be disclosed. Gioberti therefore attempted to examine the religious systems present among all the peoples of the earth in order to find elements heralding philosophical positions which were to be explicitly formulated later. Under the form Hegel would

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call “representative” lies the rational form; this means that the original revelation of God to humankind (including the very creation of man and later the revelation to the Hebrew people) contains a philosophical knowledge which was fully developed by the Hebrews, but was incomplete and confused in other peoples. The Hebrews were able to develop their religion while already possessing a complete vision of things, while the Indians, Persians, Chaldeans, and the Chinese formulated their philosophical notions under a religious covering that was not yet fully formed (p. 12). Gioberti did not share the theory of the “Greek miracle”: the development of the various philosophies in Greece and Italy did not produce anything new, it simply drew on the different forms of religious knowledge and elaborated them in forms which were increasingly complex and rigorous from a rational point of view, privileging Hebrew religious knowledge (p. 16). From a methodological standpoint, he aimed to create a balance between the facts narrated by the documents of the ancient religions and the doctrines emerging from them which could be put together to create an “ideal” reconstruction. He believed that “ideas and facts are two parallel orders which should harmonise spontaneously, without exerting reciprocal violence on each other. However, because of the nature of the human mind, just as ideal cognition must provide the right thread to guide us through the region of facts, so the region of facts can and must correct and refine ideal cognition, so that the two orders can help each other” (p. 19).

Gioberti’s most famous work, *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani* (Brussels, 1843), played a prominent role during the short neo-Guelph phase of the Italian Risorgimento, but it also provides an additional key to the interpretation of his approach to the history of philosophy. In the final part of the work, Gioberti repeats his intention to examine the remotest philosophical speculation and affirms that the historical study of texts “is necessary to grasp the idea that engenders a doctrine”. However, after these ideas have been identified, they must be analysed in their logical consequences. The study of historical sources is therefore “advisable, extremely important, and often indispensable”, but this is not enough because philosophical systems must be reproduced internally (*Del Primato*, II, pp. 588–589). Gioberti believed that confirmation from history must precede, accompany, and follow philosophical or theological demonstration. His theories on the “very ancient Italic philosophy” were rooted in the eighteenth century and were certainly not original (see *Models*, II, pp. 218, 253, and 273; III, pp. 253–254), but they enjoyed great success thanks to the overall context of the work in which they were put forward. He maintained that a national consciousness developed when a people understood the value of their origins and their history (*Del primato*, I, p. 1). His exhortation to recognise “Italian primacy” in the field of speculation was an important factor motivating scholars to intensify research into the role of Italy in the philosophical context of both the past and the present.

Galluppi and Rosmini contributed in a much more substantial way to the field of the history of philosophy, even though their reflection originated from different perspectives: Galluppi was particularly interested in the historical development of thought and aimed at a faithful understanding of the texts and the circumstances in which they were produced; Francesco Fiorentino was able to declare of his *Lettere*

filosofiche that “In Italy the history of philosophy started with this wonderful little book” (*Manuale di storia della filosofia*, Naples, 1881, III, p. 311). Rosmini, on the other hand, who was neither an idealist philosopher *malgré soi* nor a modern Catholic, that is, a Catholic open to the immanence of thought, was inclined to examine the various schools and the individual thinkers from a speculative point of view, tracing their positions back to the framework of the essential systems of the human mind. Both, however, seemed concerned to prevent the history of philosophy from remaining a merely erudite activity: in Galluppi (and even more so in Rosmini) the history of philosophy was deeply integrated into his speculative production as a whole and constituted its indispensable “complement”, and this approach induced many exponents of Italian philosophical culture to appreciate the importance of the study of the history of philosophy. Before analysing Galluppi and Rosmini’s historiographical contributions it is a good idea therefore to review some minor scholars of the history of philosophy who were variously inspired by their teachings.

(b) *Galluppi’s followers and emulators*

Galluppi did not have many followers in the area of Naples: he did not give rise to a school of the historiography of philosophy, although his mode of approaching the history of human thought met with the approval of a number of scholars. Let us mention in the first place Davide Winspeare (1775–1847), a scholar who was almost of the same age as Galluppi and who wrote a work on the history of philosophy which was longer and more analytical than the *Lettere filosofiche*. Winspeare descended from an English family and played a prominent role in the political life of the Kingdom of Naples and then the Two Sicilies. Like other exponents of the culture of southern Italy (Vincenzo Cuoco, Pasquale Borrelli, or Francesco Paolo Bozzelli), he devoted himself to philosophical studies during his period of exile in France and Germany, after the return of the Bourbons (1815–1819). Once he returned to Naples, he alternated between the study of philosophy and the legal profession, but only in 1834, after he retired from the legal career, did he decide to devote himself entirely to philosophical works. His *Saggi di filosofia intellettuale* appeared anonymously in 2 volumes consisting of 3 tomes which were published in Naples by Trani in 1843–1846. The work opens with an *Introduzione allo studio della filosofia* which occupies the first volume (1843) and also contains a general history of philosophy, written clearly, with long and frequent references to the works of the authors examined. The second volume, which is intended to outline a sort of dictionary of reason, is subdivided into two tomes: the first, published in 1844, comprises the entries from A to G; the second, published in 1846, goes from I to Z.

Winspeare’s history of philosophy deserves to be examined less superficially than it has been so far. Its object is to illustrate the fundamental inclination of the human mind to oppose doctrines based on “imagination”, a term not understood as rational speculation that seems abstract with respect to experience, but as materialistic and sensationalistic tendencies in which all things consist of dynamic relations between sensible appearances. Faced with the typical Enlightenment idea in which reason is made to emerge from a mechanism of sensible data lumped together, the

human mind claims that reason tends to grasp ideal as well as real relationships to explain the process of becoming. The history of philosophy of the last two centuries confirms that the vicissitudes of human thought consist of a series of positions related to the imagination, pure sensibility, and positions relying on the power of reason, which is to be understood as enquiring and constitutive consciousness. Winspeare had initially planned to translate Leibniz' *Nouveaux essais* into Italian (the only modern thinker, he believed, to have correctly linked sensation and mind) and to provide an introduction to the thought of Thomas Reid, whom he considered to be the greatest reformer of philosophy, which should abandon metaphysical or sensationalistic fancies and turn to the "philosophy of thought" (*Saggi di filosofia intellettuale*, I, pp. xvii-xviii). Winspeare firmly supported the Scottish school of philosophy which, in his view, had defeated vulgar empiricism and opposed Kant's thinking. He believed that the doctrines of this school, which were not well known in Italy, could become a point of reference for a philosophy that would be able to defeat both scepticism (which had been reinvigorated by Kant) and sensationalism, *Idéologie*, and German transcendental philosophy.

In his account of the history of philosophy (divided into 19 chapters: 6 on ancient thought, 2 on Scholasticism, and 11 on modern philosophy), Winspeare outlines the history of man's achievements with regard to pure thought, that is, the truths which arise from "reflection" understood as the true faculty of enquiry (*Saggi*, I, p. 498), in an attempt to mediate between the position of Galluppi and that of the Scottish school. He believed that the history of thought, considered as an autonomous discipline, serves to show the transition from philosophy understood as the search for principles and essences to philosophy as a more modest but more effective knowledge of man and his faculties. The principle which established itself over the course of history in an increasingly definite way is to "know thyself", initially formulated best by Socrates and then in the modern age by Descartes, and finally by Reid. The "civic wisdom of nations" saw a succession of three periods as identified by Vico: that of the senses, of the imagination, and of reason; however, we should not forget "the natural wisdom that originates from reason, from which it does not depart except in the case of the intemperance of the passions". Reason has imbued the life of peoples from their first origins, but its practice was often rendered vain or ineffective due to the prevalence of the senses. For this reason, the principle "know thyself" has been disregarded, and its surrogates have been imagination (poetic wisdom) and mysticism. "It is claimed", affirmed Winspeare in opposition to the contemporary trend of the romantic school, "that the traces of that wisdom have completely vanished; on the contrary, we should acknowledge that they reappeared in the subsequent epochs under different names" (I, pp. 2-3). There is a clear misinterpretation of Vico's doctrine here, as will appear more explicitly in Winspeare's highly critical discussion of the theories contained in Vico's *De antiquissima* and *Scienza Nuova*, and above all his anti-Cartesianism (see I, pp. 465-475).

Instead of creating space for an investigation of the human faculties, the principle "know thyself" has given rise in the course of history to frequent dogmatic and metaphysical deviations. After Socrates had called philosophy back from the heavens to the earth, overcoming investigation into physical and metaphysical

principles, his disciples, Plato in particular, elaborated a theory of ideas which reinstated ancient metaphysics, taking up "the hypotheses and raptures of poetic wisdom" (I, p. 30). Hence, after the great moral conceptions of the Hellenistic age, philosophy did not go on to study the human faculties and turned instead toward syncretism, giving rise to Neoplatonism, which "perverted philosophy, because it caused it to change from the speculative to the mystical" (I, p. 50). Christian theology, Aristotelian logic, and Platonism, acting together systematically, dominated culture until the revival of classical studies. It was only in the fifteenth century that the study of man considered in himself was restored, although even in the course of the Middle Ages the disputes over universals had shifted the attention of philosophy from dogmas to the cognitive abilities of the human faculties; however, neither the doctrines of knowledge nor the anthropological and ethical doctrines altered the systematic framework of Scholasticism. Therefore, for Winspeare, eclecticism never succeeded in reconciling the different positions, nor was the Christian religion able to bring together the different metaphysical and dogmatic tendencies.

In Winspeare's view, the renewal of philosophy only took place with the beginning of the modern age. With Bacon, Galileo, and Descartes reflection shifted and concentrated on the method, which centred on an analysis of the abilities and faculties of man. "The regulating principle of Descartes' doctrine was the same *methodological doubt* that Socrates had used to confine science within the limits of human capabilities. But Socrates took experience as his guide, whereas Descartes started to have doubts about it and wanted to find a principle prior to experience itself in reason" (I, p. 127, italics ours). It would even seem that, thanks to the principle of the *cogito*, it is possible to carry out a direct and thorough study of man, not as a hypothesis but as a reality based on consciousness. But this was a short-lived delusion, since the Cartesian school (broadly outlined by Winspeare) proved unfaithful to its own method, rendering thought more rigid and becoming materialism (with Hobbes), pantheism (with Spinoza, who is also labelled a materialist), idealism (with Berkeley), and pre-established harmony with Leibniz. In its reaction to the revival of metaphysics, empiricism exclusively adopted Bacon's method, reducing man to a material being and neglecting the fact that he is conscious and intelligent. In the eighteenth century, the failure of Cartesianism therefore caused the establishment of Condillac's sensationalism and materialism, which was spread by the encyclopaedists (I, p. 195).

Kant is not examined in depth and Winspeare does not hide his perplexity when confronted with what he considered to be his abstruse concepts (I, pp. 341–342). He believed that *a priori* synthetic judgements are contradictory, and the existence of categories, *a priori* conditions of knowledge, proves doubtful because experience makes it possible to check the construction of a universal concept, starting from an analysis of the facts and arriving at abstraction and generalisation. Winspeare does not think that Kantianism is able to oppose *Idéologie*, in which the reduction of concepts to the physiological dynamics thwarted the rational and spiritual sphere. Reid's idea of consciousness, on the other hand, which was to be further developed by Dugald Stewart, is different and of greater significance and incisiveness (I, pp. 384–385). Winspeare believed that he had discovered many systems in the

history of philosophy which successfully defended the spiritual nature of knowledge and hence the principle “know thyself”. Of these, the system of *common sense* is that which best ensures the primacy of a spiritualistic psychology, avoiding metaphysical and dogmatic abstractions.

Winspeare’s work can be interpreted as a homage to Galluppi’s philosophy of analysis and synthesis by an amateur philosopher; but other Neapolitan intellectuals felt the influence of Galluppi’s interest in the history of philosophy too. Michele Baldacchini Gargano (1803–1870), the brother of the more well-known literary critic and poet Francesco Saverio (1800–1879), was the author of several works on historical subjects and an elaborate framework of the general history of philosophy. In 1840 he published the *Vita e filosofia di Tommaso Campanella* in Naples, which led to the rehabilitation of Campanella’s thought and to Bertrando Spaventa’s historiographical theories and, later, to the more profound analysis of Alessandro D’Ancona, Domenico Berti, and Luigi Amabile. The work, written from a biographical and documentary point of view, seems rather superficial, especially regarding the documents relating to the Calabrian conspiracy and the trial that took place in 1599–1600. Subsequently Baldacchini published an account of Campanella’s thought under the same title: *Vita e filosofia di Tommaso Campanella* (Naples, 1843). This work, consisting of nine chapters, is in fact a sort of general history of philosophy before (and after) Campanella: chapter I deals with Greek philosophy, giving particular prominence to Plato and Aristotle; chapter II is devoted to Stoicism; chapter III to Neoplatonism; chapter IV to the thought of the Fathers, with special emphasis on St Augustine; chapter V to medieval philosophy; and chapter VI to the philosophy of the Renaissance in Italy. Campanella’s thought is explained in the last three chapters: Baldacchini somewhat arbitrarily subdivides his narrative into speculative and practical philosophy. The only well-conceived part, however, is the annotated index of the themes in Campanella’s philosophy (pp. 207–215). He generally follows the theories of Galluppi, but does not seem to fully grasp the meaning of the criticism aimed at modern thought. The chapters on ancient and medieval philosophy are written in general terms and are almost entirely taken from Brucker and Tennemann. The account of modern philosophy is drawn from Tennemann and Buhle. As for the interpretation of Campanella, Baldacchini limits himself to observing that he did not establish a “clear distinction between understanding and sensibility”, thus omitting to examine in depth the questions of consciousness and the self. Campanella is therefore judged to be “a broad rather than a deep intelligence”, unlike Vico, who had instead “a deep rather than a vast mind” (pp. 182–183).

In his work *Dello scetticismo, trattato* (Naples, 1851), Baldacchini outlines a history of scepticism with the object of defining the meaning of this attitude of the human mind, and in parallel to this he proceeds with his framework of general history. In his account, Kant is given a prominent role: Baldacchini considers it progress that, despite the declared impossibility of acquiring a knowledge of the *noumenon*, Kant’s system represents “a victory over sensualism and pure empiricism” (p. 180). He believed that Kant elevated modern thought to its highest point, providing the truths found in ancient thought with increasing complexity, while it was thanks to the influence of scepticism that these truths were induced to clarify

their principles. Other similar theories are maintained in the work entitled *Della filosofia dopo Kant. Ragionamenti [...] in continuazione del Trattato dello scetticismo* (Naples, 1854). It is significant that Baldacchini presents these two works as a “Summary of the entire history of philosophy with critical annotations”. Moving from Galluppi’s need to explain Kantianism without accepting its consequences, Baldacchini puts forward an “internal” history of thought that can unite and realise the external historical sources. Thanks to the internal history of mankind, it is possible to accept Kantianism as a necessity and at the same time reject its logic.

The work *Della filosofia dopo Kant* is intended to continue the chapters of *Vita e filosofia di Tommaso Campanella* devoted to the history of philosophy. According to Baldacchini, this history can be divided into three periods: from Socrates to Descartes, from Descartes to Kant, and after Kant. He presents German philosophy from the age of Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling (with a return to Spinoza), taking up the criticisms raised by Galluppi and Winspeare (pp. 8–31). He then moves on to a presentation of French philosophy, dwelling in particular on Cousin and Lamennais (pp. 33–54), and Italian philosophy from Vico to Gioberti. As for this last section, it is worth noting the inclusion of Colecchi’s criticisms of Galluppi (which Baldacchini seems to share: pp. 59–74), Galluppi’s criticisms of Rosmini (pp. 76–82), and Gioberti’s criticism of Rosmini and *vice versa* (pp. 82–93). Baldacchini sees in contemporary philosophy, and in Italian events in particular, a dynamic between transcendentalism, which had arisen in imitation of the Kantian perspective, and ontological philosophy. In his view, Italian thought was searching for a balance between psychologism, which eighteenth-century thought was entangled in, and “objective philosophy” (Rosmini and Gioberti). For Baldacchini, the obstacle to avoid was an excess of “objective philosophy” which, he appeared to think, corresponded to the idealism of Schelling and Hegel, in which critical philosophy seemed to have been surpassed by absolute immanentism (pp. 95–97).

Another outstanding figure to profit from Galluppi’s teaching was Enrico Pessina (1828–1916), an exponent of Neapolitan jurisprudential culture, who taught criminal law at the University of Naples. Pessina began his career when he was very young with a work entitled *Quadro storico dei sistemi filosofici*, which was published in Naples by Vincenzo Raimondi (1844, pp. 324) and republished by Silvestri the following year in Milan. Pessina derived much of his material from Tennemann and from Poli’s *Supplimenti*, but his approach was undoubtedly closer to that of Galluppi. In the foreword (‘Avvertimento’) he presents his work as a mere exercise, even though it can also be used as a textbook of general history, thanks to the detailed introductory bibliography (pp. 25–58). Pessina praises Galluppi’s undertaking, which was intended to create a new history of philosophy; he also expresses the wish to see Italian thought adequately treated, for neither Brucker nor Buhle nor Tennemann had written much about it. Pessina begins by outlining the framework of the philosophical systems and, like Tennemann and Cousin, he finds that sensualism and idealism are the most vigorous of these; scepticism and mysticism must be added to them. Following in Galluppi’s footsteps, Pessina attempts to resolve the dualism between sensualism and idealism by identifying a system that takes them both into account. It remains unclear in what way this system – which was also

conciliatory – differs from the eclecticism put forward, for example, by Poli. However, as a faithful follower of Galluppi, Pessina believes that the needs of the history of thought can be understood if we also keep in view experience and consciousness; for this reason, in concluding his *Quadro storico*, he places Galluppi at the peak of the development of Italian philosophy as an “empiricist and rationalist” thinker (pp. 304–310).

Luigi Palmieri (1807–1896) was active in a wide range of disciplines: he was a philosopher and a historian of philosophy, but also a physicist, a geologist, and a volcanologist (he held the position of director of the Vesuvian Observatory). He wrote his *Lezioni intorno alla filosofia della morale e del diritto* (Naples, 1842) following Galluppi. In the eulogy he delivered at Galluppi’s funeral, he tried to find a point of agreement between Galluppi and the doctrines of Rosmini, Mamiani, and Gioberti: for Palmieri, these four writers, who had asserted the originality of the Italian philosophical tradition, freed Italian culture from “shameful intellectual servitude” to the sensationalistic and rationalistic doctrines of the eighteenth century. Palmieri underlined the fundamental role played by Galluppi, who had been a true pupil of Leibniz and Wolff, influenced less by Reid and to a limited extent by Vico, and who had managed to unite ontology and psychology; however, unlike Rosmini and Gioberti, Galluppi never managed to find ontologism in the authentic Italian tradition. Although Galluppi did not accept Rosmini’s “ideal Being”, he did not share the criticisms raised by Gioberti; he admitted the remains of psychologism possibly present in Rosmini, and this saved him from radical ontologism (*Elogio storico del barone Pasquale Galluppi*, Naples, 1847, pp. 13–16). Even in the inaugural lecture he pronounced in Naples in November 1847, when he succeeded Galluppi to the chair of logic and metaphysics, Palmieri again stressed that the Italian philosophical tradition united psychology (internal and external experience) and ontology, but this balance was destroyed by the servitude to sensationalism to which eighteenth-century Italian philosophers had subjected themselves (*Prolusione alle lezioni di logica e metafisica*, Naples, 1848, p. 20). Palmieri did however exaggerate the position held by Galluppi, who had never condemned sensationalism, nor had he addressed the question of the national philosophical tradition.

Palmieri’s concern to avoid any dependence on foreign philosophical fashions (first sensationalism and then transcendental idealism) was to reappear several years later, after the fall of the Bourbon regime, when the most outstanding exponents of Hegelianism, namely Augusto Vera and Bertrando Spaventa, were appointed to teach at the University of Naples. This circumstance was regarded by Palmieri (who in 1861 had moved to the new chair of “Terrestrial physics and meteorology”, after having conducted important research into the field of earthquakes and volcanoes from 1849 to 1860) as a new menace arising from the abstract reasonings and reveries of the “philosophies of the North” revived by the Hegelians, which he believed could have again provoked the loss of Italian national consciousness (cf. the inaugural lecture for his new chair: *Nuovo indirizzo da dare alle Università italiane*, Naples, 1861). Spaventa reacted to these criticisms with his renowned opening speech of 1861 entitled *Della nazionalità della filosofia*, where he proposed a different way of understanding the Italian contribution to the progress of philosophy. The

Hegelian school prevailed over Palmieri’s point of view, which was finally judged to be anachronistic and inappropriate by several critics. Really Spaventa contrasted Palmieri and his exaltation of Italian philosophy with an equally forced reconstruction based on an alleged “European circulation” of Italian Renaissance thought.

Luigi Blanch (1784–1872) was primarily a historian, especially in the field of military history, but he was also keenly interested in the philosophical debate between Italy, France, and Germany, and adhered to Galluppi’s perspective: philosophy linked to experience stresses the need for human enquiry to unite analysis and synthesis, that is to say, internal and external experience. Galluppi was also a significant example of an approach to the history of philosophy with a method which enabled the historian to constantly give the philosopher “control” over the different components of human research. Blanch considered the interest in works on the history of philosophy which was evident in that period, especially in Germany and France, as a confirmation of Galluppi’s position. The list of his written contributions (which started to appear in Neapolitan reviews in 1832 and ended in 1860 and are now collected in a volume edited by F. Ottonello, Genoa 1993) shows that he was deeply concerned to elaborate the general history of philosophy that many had expected Galluppi to write. In the magazine *Progresso* (1835) he praised Mamiani’s *Del rinnovamento della filosofia antica italiana*, defending it from Rosmini’s criticisms (Blanch, pp. 237–259). For Blanch, any effort made to obtain a synthetic and truthful point of view on the whole of reality, and therefore to formulate a philosophical system, was destined to fail. His predominant position seems to be the sceptic observation that all knowledge leads to statements that are neither true nor useful for humans. Nonetheless, scholars who believe in the joint work of humanity to attain the truth have always existed. This paradox must be accepted because imperfection and perfectibility coexist in man. For this reason, man goes in search of the “best method that can help him to try to escape from the limits set by nature” (pp. 237–239). Blanch believed therefore that, owing to human imperfection in approaching the great questions, it is necessary for philosophical systems to complement each other (p. 255). Each specific philosophical perspective enhances a faculty of man, one of its aspects or its special way of organising reality, compared with the other faculties; hence “eclecticism is not an arbitrary system resulting from particular circumstances; but [...] it originates and derives its power from human nature, it is needed to support the course and progress of the sciences, which can only arise from the efforts made by all scholars operating in different directions and in harmony with their particular propensities” (p. 257).

Literary history or “the history of the sciences” (as Blanch defined it in his review in the magazine *Progresso* (1837–1838) of Tissot’s French translation of Ritter’s history of ancient philosophy: see above, p. 126) aims to describe the origin and the phases of development of the different sciences (among which philosophy); but it has an even more significant aim: “clearly listing and explaining all the relations and the action science has produced as well as the relations and action the progress of knowledge and society have produced on science itself”. Some advances of the sciences, including the experimental sciences, can ignore the problems of man and can even be explained exclusively by human discoveries or pure reasoning, but this

cannot be applied to philosophy, whose steps forward are totally dependent on the moral condition of humanity (Blanch, pp. 284–285). Indeed, the fact that human speculation became rooted in schools and in the methods adopted by the teachers, who lived in specific places, shows the problem of the national identity of philosophies. Blanch solved this problem by declaring that the subdivision of men into peoples, nations, and traditions is important for the preservation and enhancement of the particular efforts made by thinkers among their peoples (pp. 241–243). The contributions made by the different nations to the development of philosophical knowledge are also clear in the “succession”, that is to say, the development that the philosophers of a certain nation impart to specific elements formulated by other philosophers from another nation which had flourished previously. Blanch therefore approves of the method used by Mamiani, who had pointed out the degree of perfection to which Italian Renaissance thinkers had brought the ideas of the ancient thinkers of Italy. He stresses the merits of Italian thought compared to European thought, never neglecting, however, to link it back to its remotest origins. If tradition is understood as a connection to a spontaneous activity of philosophising, which must be outlined on the basis of the language and the written records of a people or a period, Blanch declares himself very prudent, because this original system has not been reconstructed yet; but if a nation possesses a true philosophical system right from the beginning, then it is possible to carry out a historical analysis of the influences exercised by this philosophical system and propose a return to it, similar to that theorised by Mamiani. Blanch considers southern Italian thought as particularly fruitful: resting on its ancient Pythagorean origins, it unfolded through Thomas Aquinas, sixteenth-century Calabrian philosophers, Bruno, then Vico, Genovesi, and Filangieri, up to Galluppi. The “southern” school can be compared to the “Tuscan school”, which was characterised by Platonism. The “realist” Machiavelli conceived the science of history by referring to the example of Roman antiquity and proceeding empirically, whereas Vico was inspired by Greek and Pythagorean antiquity and sought the principles of history in idealities (pp. 250–253).

(c) *The historiography of philosophy influenced by Rosmini*

The historiography of philosophy elaborated by Rosmini differed from that of Galluppi in particular because it did not take into account the diachronic evolution of philosophical problems: Rosmini believed that history was fundamentally a genetic and systematic analysis of doctrines. Luigi Bonelli (1797–1840) was a scholar from Rome who came into contact with Rosmini precisely through his method of studying the history of philosophy. He was the same age as Rosmini, but died prematurely; he taught physics and philosophy at the *Pontificio Seminario Romano* and not only possessed a vast knowledge of philosophy and history but was also deeply interested in scientific questions. He was fundamentally eclectic: in his physical and cosmological doctrines, Bonelli combined dynamism and atomistic mechanism; in his epistemological doctrines, he was particularly interested in the empiricist tendency, but did not fail to consider other positions, including those of Galluppi and Rosmini. Bonelli is included here because he wrote a general history of philosophy for use in teaching: *Praecipuorum philosophiae systematum disquisitione historica* (Rome, 1829, pp. iv-180; Italian transl.: *Disquisizione storica dei*

principali sistemi filosofici, Loreto, 1856). In this work, the history of philosophy is divided into five epochs: the pre-Socratics; from the Socrates to the Stoics; from the Roman empire to the Renaissance; from Galileo to Hobbes; and from Newton to the end of the eighteenth century. The work closes with a chapter on the “present state of philosophy”. Bonelli distinguishes between six essential forms of philosophising: “contemplative”, “abstract”, “experimental”, “empirical”, “sceptical”, and “unbelieving” (Voltaire) (*Disquisitio historica*, pp. 121–157). When he wrote his *Disquisitio historica*, he did not know of Poli’s work or the latest developments in French eclectic philosophy. His points of reference were the works of Brucker, Degérando, Buhle, and Tennemann. For Bonelli, the history of philosophy marks the vicissitudes of human knowledge, which is suspended between experience and reason. He resolved the dialectic between the reasons of empiricism and those of rationalism by appealing to experience under the guidance of the rational method.

Bonelli had been attracted by the personality of the young Rosmini (whom he had probably met in 1823 during Rosmini’s stay in Rome) and wrote to him to consult him about a problem of method: how can we correctly classify the different philosophical positions? Rosmini’s answer (dated 1st October, 1825) is well-known because, after appearing in his first collection of philosophical writings (*Frammento di lettera sulla classificazione de’ sistemi filosofici e sulle esposizioni necessarie a ritrovare il vero*, in *Opuscoli filosofici*, vol. II, Milan, 1828, pp. 492–507), it was published again in the *Introduzione alla filosofia*. In the letter, Rosmini refused to accept historical accounts linked to the personality and individual works of the philosophers (see below, pp. 505–506). Here we will limit ourselves to observing that Bonelli fundamentally agreed with his interlocutor: he believed that the history of philosophy must be illustrated by emphasising the principles underlying the systems which follow on from each other in the course of that history, comparing the guiding principles with each other. However, for didactic purposes, he did not believe the narrative should be centred on a comparison between systems and he preferred to adopt a diachronic method. He went back to the same theme in his extensive survey of Barchou de Penhoën’s *Histoire de la philosophie allemande de Leibniz jusqu’à Hegel* (see above, pp. 382–383), which appeared in the *Annali delle scienze religiose* (1837–1839) and was also published separately under the title *Della filosofia tedesca da Leibniz fino ad Hegel* (Rome, 1837). Here Bonelli points out that “in the domain of philosophy, theories are one thing, systems are another, and dreams are yet another. Theories contain positively demonstrated truths. Systems contain great and steadfast principles, through which they try to explain phenomena and develop doctrines; and although they often enlarge these principles excessively and do not entirely reflect the truth, they nevertheless contain points of very grave importance, the analysis of which leads to true science. But reasoning devoid of any concrete foundation and fantasies containing nothing true are mere dreams. Theories must be studied, systems must be discussed, dreams must be abandoned”. Bonelli concludes that the best method of proceeding is to present systems as “attempts”, avoiding excessive comparisons as if they were the same as the principles on which they are based (p. 32).

From the same Roman environment, but another great ecclesiastical university, the Jesuit *Collegio Romano*, emerged the outstanding personality of a theologian who was also a perceptive observer of the history of thought: the Piedmontese Jesuit Giovanni Perrone (1794–1876), author of a brief but original compendium of the history of theology presented in the form of a comparison with the history of philosophy. Giovanni Perrone was an admirer of Rosmini, but this personal and intellectual admiration never gave rise to an open acceptance of a doctrinal nature; Perrone's historical and theological work, nevertheless, reveals the influence of Rosmini's tendency to accompany his great theoretical treatises with historical surveys. The short work considered here is entitled *Historia theologiae cum philosophia comparata synopsis* and is related to Perrone's most important work, the *Praelectiones theologicae*, which appeared in Rome in 1835–1842 and saw countless new editions. The *Historia theologiae* is indeed included in vol. I of the compendium of the *Praelectiones* published in Rome in 1845 (which we quote here from the Brussels edition of 1848).

Perrone observes that theology, which has Revelation as its object, should not present an evolution and hence have a history. Nevertheless, since it is also a human activity, it goes through a series of vicissitudes and is thus connected to the history of philosophy (*Historia theologiae*, p. 3). The history traced by Perrone is therefore a history of theology compared with the often uncertain developments of human science. Among all human manifestations, philosophy is that which had the greatest relationship with Christian theology in its early period, from the age of the Apostles to Arianism. In ancient times, philosophy had not solved any problems. The Christian religion proposed certain paths to be followed: from this point of view, Perrone does not believe that ancient philosophy was a preparation for Christianity, but that Christianity carried out a critical reconsideration of ancient doctrines in order to affirm its own credibility as a universal religion of salvation. The conflict with the nascent heresies – some of which (like Gnosticism) originated autonomously and others which derived from deviations within the Christian communities themselves – produced in the reflection of the Christian thinkers (especially in the school of Alexandria) the need for a philosophically rigorous elaboration. In the creation of a systematic theology, the temptation to borrow some principles from Greek philosophies was strong in Origen, whom Perrone credits with holding a definitely heterodox position (pp. 6–7).

The second age in the history of theology was marked by the Trinitarian controversies, thanks to which theological terminology became more refined and acquired new definitions and a new awareness. In the controversies which arose after Athanasius, Perrone observes the decisive contribution of Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Aristotelian philosophical doctrines. And it was thanks to the luminaries from Cappadocia (Basilus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus) that it was possible to elaborate a doctrine that was not subject to Neoplatonic doctrines on emanation (p. 10). Augustine, who marks the beginning of the third epoch (encompassing late ancient and early medieval thought), was very familiar with the study of pagan philosophy but did not use it in its entirety. Augustine's thought is a real manifestation of Christian philosophy because, in order to elaborate philosophical

concepts, it makes use of important elements of the Christian religion, considering them liable to rational interpretation (p. 13). The early period of the Middle Ages was still characterised by the influence of Neoplatonic thought. Perrone however does not intend to mix the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius, which he acknowledges to be authentic Christian theology that inspired great mystical thinkers, with some other results of pseudo-mysticism, which were destined to take concrete form in the philosophy of John Scotus Eriugena. The latter did nothing but spread the principles of emanationism and pantheism, positions which were present, in part covertly, throughout the Middle Ages (pp. 16–17).

The fourth epoch of theology went from the beginning of the dispute over universals, from Anselm of Aosta (seen as the advocate of Christian realism, which is essentially contrasted with Scotus Eriugena's emanationism) up to the Council of Trent, thus embracing the whole of Scholasticism. Perrone rejects two negative interpretations of Scholasticism: that which defines it as "barbaram et tenebri- cosam", and that, maintained by the French eclectics, which defines it as an epoch of confusion between philosophy and theology, with some attempts at autonomy and rationalism (pp. 22–23). For Perrone, Scholasticism made progress in both disciplines (thanks to Anselm, Bonaventure, and Aquinas, but also Albert the Great and Henry of Ghent), without creating confusion between philosophy and theology. The new Christian medieval civilisation required the systematic union of the doctrines scattered through the works of the Fathers, and this was made possible by the use of Aristotelian dialectic (pp. 20–21).

The fifth epoch began with the Council of Trent and ended with Kantian philosophy. Here Perrone alternates between focusing primarily on Catholic theology and adopting a framework of the history of philosophy that goes beyond the boundaries of this theology. He affirms in the first place that the decisions of the Council of Trent helped the development of theology and education and denies that they privileged positive theology at the expense of speculative theology. On the contrary, Scholastic theology was revived in Spain by Cano and Vitoria and flourished with Suárez, greatly enriched and expanded even from a philosophical point of view. For Perrone, the greatest historical merit of Catholic theology was to have fought the "rationis nullitatem, seu *nihilismum* in fide" asserted by Luther (pp. 27–28). The divorce between science and faith is also present in modern Catholic thought, and Perrone considers ontologism (as well as sentimentalism, supernaturalism, and traditionalism) as anomalies. But he does not accept that this separation was due to the influence of Descartes. The distinction between science and faith, which was judged favourably by Descartes, had never been denied by the Fathers and even less by the Scholastics. Descartes therefore proposed nothing new: at most he defended a method which, when studying natural truths, aimed at being "independent" from revealed principles (p. 29). It is therefore necessary to correct the verdict on Cartesianism, and Perrone makes it clear that there is no connection, for example, between Descartes' principles and the pantheistic development of rationalism in Spinoza. The image of Descartes as he who introduced absolute rationalism was elaborated by the German idealists and the French eclectics in order to win the father of modern thought over to their positions. Following some notes by Galluppi

contained in the *Lettere filosofiche* and the *Saggio filosofico*, Perrone observes that Descartes did nothing but propose a moderate rationalism which did not depart from the rigorous Scholastic position, which fundamentally claimed the right of reason to proceed independently from faith, wherever possible (pp. 30–31). This was a clear affirmation of balance between the Scholastic method and the Cartesian method, which is accepted as long as it contains useful and positive elements. In this way, Perrone sides with the positions held by Bossuet, Fénelon, and Gerdil.

The sixth and final epoch of the history of theology began with post-Kantian philosophy. Perrone believes that both German idealistic philosophy (“neo-germanica philosophia”) and French eclecticism (which he calls “neo-eclectismus” and to which he attributes a “germanica origo”) endangered the future development of balanced theological thought. The cornerstones of these two philosophical movements were pantheism and rationalism, which interpret the Christian religion in relation to immanence and to a philosophy concerned with myths. For Perrone, the verdict on medieval philosophy expressed by eclecticism is particularly insidious, as it reduces its essence to pantheistic realism, nominalism, and conceptualism, at the expense of the true and correct realism put forward by Anselm, Aquinas, and Bonaventure; more particularly, Perrone accuses the works of Cousin, Taillandier, and Rousselot of bad faith. He explains that, within the Catholic area, there are several opponents of German transcendental philosophy and eclectic neo-pantheism, but there are also numerous defections (Lamennais, Hermes, and Bautain). However, Perrone notes with satisfaction the emergence of entirely orthodox Catholic thinkers, among whom he mentions Rosmini, Gioberti, and obviously Galluppi as well as Cesare Baldinotti (p. 38). Besides repeatedly pointing out the need for philosophy and theology to proceed in agreement, he favours a close link between historical enquiry into the origin of religiosity and the history of philosophy which investigates the rational principles of the ancient peoples. In a certain sense, he accepts that the testimonies of divine truth must be subject to the scrutiny of historical criticism, because this brings advantages to both theology and philosophy. We will find a similar position in Rosmini, notably in the preliminary writings to his *Teosofia*, such as the little work *Del divino nella natura*.

Cesare Cantù (1804–1895), an exponent of Lombard culture who came into contact with Rosmini, was a patriot, a Liberal Catholic thinker, and a fecund writer, although not always a rigorous historian. His correspondence with Rosmini, which began in 1837, also reveals his particular interest in Rosmini’s study of the history of philosophy. Cantù’s *Storia universale* in 35 volumes appeared for the first time in Turin, published by Pomba, between 1838 and 1844. The first 18 volumes are devoted to the narration of universal history (arranged in chronological order and not divided into peoples or great currents) and the remaining 17 volumes are intended as a commentary on the narrative part (*Schiarimenti e note alla storia universale*, 6 vols) and to illustrate the development of humanity in its different aspects (*Documenti per la storia universale*, 11 vols). This last section includes the biographies of illustrious men and deals with archaeology and the fine arts, philosophy, legislation, religions, military history, geography, and general chronology. The volume *Sulla filosofia*, first outlined in 1839, was published in 1844 (the date Cantù

added when he finished his work was 1st March, 1845) and included the subtitle: *Sistemi filosofici. Documenti dell'Enciclopedia storica* (pp. xxviii-612).

In the introduction to his volume *Sulla filosofia*, Cantù starts from a definition of philosophy as a “desire for wisdom” and therefore truth, which it shares with religion. Against the deviations of scepticism, materialism, and pantheism, it is necessary to recognise the close connection which exists between religion and philosophy. Divine revelation and the intuition of Being as an ideal (the influence of Rosmini is evident here) are two sources of truth, and philosophy should respect both of them (pp. xii-xiv). Following Heinrich Ritter, whose *Geschichte der Philosophie alter Zeit* had been recently translated into French, Cantù points out the advantages of studying this discipline. The historian of philosophy should have an adequate knowledge of the sources and carry out “severe but not unkind criticism”; “it is inevitable that we look on the thinkers of the past with the eyes of the present, but in order to do justice to them we should also be able to rise above our own time” (pp. xvii-xviii). He then provides a short outline of the history of philosophy, characterised by moments of light and shade. Cantù believes that the diversity of modern philosophical systems is a source of great bewilderment: the abstractions of rationalism were followed by materialism and then “ideology”; Kant seemed to curb the excesses and bring intelligence back to its principles, avoiding materialism, but his legacy is also problematic. The abuses of idealism were brought to an end by eclecticism, but eclecticism is repugnant to common sense because the method of “reconciliation” is inadmissible (pp. xxiii-xxiv). So what remains of contemporary speculation that can be considered to be of value? The awareness that it is necessary to trust a providential view of history, in which we can grasp a mysterious design of salvation and the conversion from evil and error (pp. xxvii-xxviii).

As for the “documents” included in the volume *Sulla filosofia*, we find ourselves looking at a true patchwork. Cantù starts from Indian philosophy, borrowing from H.T. Colebrooke’s works (probably in the French edition: *Essais sur la philosophie des Hindous*, Paris, 1833), which he had already used when writing his volumes on universal history. Plenty of space is reserved for ancient thought. Cantù starts with Pythagoreanism, without identifying it necessarily with the Italic school, and deals with the thought of Empedocles (which he explains using D. Scinà’s work *Memorie sulla vita e filosofia d’Empedocle Gergentino*, Palermo, 1813; 2nd ed. Milan, 1838). He then describes the philosophy of Socrates in abundant detail, taken in particular from Rosmini’s writings on the history of the principle of morality, and he quotes the *Phaedo* in full. He also presents the *Table* of Cebes. Platonic thought is explained following the systematic method proposed by the *Précis de l’histoire de la philosophie* by Salinis and Scorbiac, then following Buhle’s *Geschichte der Philosophie* (the Italian translation of which was available to Cantù). Aristotle’s thought is illustrated in its encyclopaedic structure, including a number of quotations, for example, from A.F. Rio (*Essai sur l’histoire de l’esprit humain dans l’antiquité*, Paris, 1829); for metaphysics, Cantù follows P. Ravaisson-Mollien, *Essai sur la Métaphysique d’Aristote* (1837–1846); for ethics, he refers to Rosmini; for politics, to E. Lerminier (probably to the *Introduction générale à l’histoire du droit*, Paris, 1829); and for logic, he follows *La logique d’Aristote*, edited by J. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire (Paris,

1839–1844, 4 vols). The final verdict on the Stagirite is taken from Buhle, and the parallel between Plato and Aristotle comes from A.W. Schlegel's *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* (in the Italian translation made by Giovanni Gherardini, Milan, 1844). Among the philosophies of the Roman Hellenistic age, Cantù only deals with Stoicism (Zeno is presented following Buhle and Epictetus' *Manual* is quoted in full). He then moves on to "Judaean-Hellenic philosophy", represented by Philo (cf. J. Matter's work *Histoire critique du Gnosticisme*, Paris, 1828) and Hebrew esoteric wisdom, that is to say, the Cabbala.

For Cantù, the transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages was marked by Lull's *ars combinatoria* (in this case, his source is the history of logic contained in Gassendi's *Syntagma philosophicum*). After Lull he presents Scholasticism, basing himself on the work of Barthélemy Hauréau. He does not consider the philosophy of the Renaissance, however, to be a distinct period in its own right, and he makes the modern age begin with Campanella (in this case, following a source identified merely as E.N.). He continues with Descartes, Spinoza, and Hobbes, based on the French translation (published in Paris in 1840) of H. Hallam's *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the XVth, XVIth and XVIIth Centuries* (London, 1837–1839). The presentation of Kant's system (which omits the source) concludes the treatment of modern philosophy. There are, however, many gaps, and Cantù does not mention empiricism or Leibniz. The volume ends with the *Sistema filosofico di Rosmini*, which Cantù had explicitly requested from Rosmini himself, who rapidly wrote it in 1844. Cantù's decision to conclude the volume with Rosmini's system shows that he believed Rosmini to represent the highest stage of human speculation. In the epilogue to the volume he justifies the absence of other contemporary thinkers as follows: if we allowed all these authors to speak, then "the history of philosophy would go astray in the knowledge and evaluation of contemporary philosophical aspirations which tend towards a method of proceeding situated halfway between history and philosophical criticism" (p. 612). Even though he was aware of its flaws, Rosmini himself praised the *Storia universale* for its intention to unite the history of civilisation and philosophy to the religious history of humanity, in an explicitly Christian perspective.

The *Elementa philosophiae theoreticae* (Turin, 1837) by Pier Antonio Corte (1804–1876), professor of theoretical philosophy at the University of Turin, was the first philosophy textbook of a specifically Rosminian tendency. Its success induced the author to publish an Italian translation: *Elementi di filosofia. Ad uso degli studenti delle scuole secondarie* (Turin, 1851). Rosmini himself encouraged this undertaking, in a letter dated 12th November 1851 (*Epistolario completo*, Casale Monferrato, 1887–1894, XI, pp. 412–413). There were various editions of the work, and the 1853–1854 edition in two volumes also included a compendium of the history of philosophy (II, pp. 199–316), placed after the sections on logic, metaphysics, and ethics. Corte adopted Rosmini's perspective and made some interesting changes. The history of philosophy is judged as "essential and constitutive of philosophy itself": indeed, "since the human mind is the immediate object of philosophy, is it not evident that, when applied to the study of the most elevated questions and the study of the human mind in particular, it should serve as a complement to

the very science of spirit?”. The history of philosophy serves therefore to make us appreciate principles “on account of their consequences”, it serves to protect us against error, and finally to complete the teaching of philosophy by providing an adequate knowledge of the various systems, without however exacerbating the contrasts between them and making us think that philosophy aims to confuse the search for reality and misdirect people’s minds (II, pp. 200–202).

In his account of the history of philosophy, besides Rosmini, Corte also refers to Tennemann-Poli, Buhle, and Ritter. He starts with a representative of sensationalism (Thales) and a representative of rationalism (Pythagoras), and concludes symmetrically with the systems of Locke and Leibniz, which express what appears to be the fundamental opposition running through the entire history of thought. For Corte, the history of thought finds its epilogue in the final expressions of scepticism: after Hume’s scepticism, the Scottish school of Reid did not manage to create a theory of reason able to justify the existence of reality. The Kantian solution did not greatly alter this situation as critical philosophy is nothing other than Reid’s theory, “albeit systematized and elaborated with scientific rigour” (II, pp. 311–315). Taking up Rosmini’s judgements and intensifying them, Corte believes that Kantian scepticism develops into Fichte’s idealism, Schelling’s pantheism, and Hegel’s “nothingism”. The new direction taken by Schelling is not very encouraging either, as it speaks of a “philosophy of revelation” and a concord between philosophy and the Christian religion. The conclusion is not optimistic: “Now, these attempts so frequently reiterated by the human spirit, and invariably more or less unfruitful, this perpetual reciprocal opposition between theories and systems show quite clearly the weakness of our reason, and how this reason, if it is left to its own powers, is helpless in safely reaching its end” (II, pp. 315–316). The solution put forward by Corte lies in the agreement between faith and reason, philosophy and Christian wisdom.

Of all the members of the Institute of Charity, Michele Parma (1802–1873) was the most interested in the study of historiography. He had a complex and tormented personality; from the early 1830s he associated with Rosmini, but abandoned the Congregation in 1853. He started to write on philosophical subjects as a consequence of his interest in Cousin and his vision of the history of philosophy (*Discorso sul progresso delle dottrine razionali ed ecclesiastiche di Victor Cousin*, Milan, 1833). At the same time, however, he became greatly attracted by Rosmini’s *Nuovo Saggio*, and wrote a long article on it which was published in the *Ricoglitore italiano e straniero*, 1834, part I, n. 6, pp. 521–555. He then became interested in Mamiani and published a text in defence of *Rinnovamento*, published in *Ricoglitore italiano e straniero*, II (1835), part II, pp. 625–685. At the same time, he began to study the thought of Saint-Simon: *Del Sansimonismo considerato in relazione ai sistemi filosofici e alla dottrina cattolica. Discorso* (Milan, 1835). His most important historical work, however, was a series of articles which were published in the *Ricoglitore* and then collected in the volume *Sopra Giovambattista Vico. Studi quattro* (Milan, 1838). This was a very detailed work, even though it was fundamentally an analysis of the edition of Vico’s works edited by Giuseppe Ferrari and the monograph *La mente di Giovambattista Vico* (1837), also by Ferrari.

Pietro De Nardi (1847–1905) wrote a defence of Rosmini's position, including his idea of the history of philosophy. In the course of the Rosminian debate, he proved to be a relentless polemicist, opposing both the neo-Thomists from the Canton of Ticino in Switzerland (in whose schools he had taught) and the Jesuits, and even spiritualists such as Conti and Allievo. Unlike the other apologists of Rosmini, he had a historical mentality and attempted to contextualize his position, relating it closely to the development of modern thought. His vast polemical work against the Jesuit Giovanni Maria Cornoldi (*Antonio Rosmini e i gesuiti dinanzi a San Tommaso d'Aquino*, Turin, 1882) reveals that, even in the throes of bitter controversy, De Nardi was able to cover all the fields of the history of philosophy. Worthy of note are his essays *Della Metafisica ne' suoi rapporti colla storia della filosofia* (Turin, 1886); *Del viaggio metodico dell'umana ragione alla scoperta del supremo principio della filosofia* (Catania, 1887); *La teorica rosminiana della forma dell'umana intelligenza ne' suoi rapporti colle Teoriche di Kant, Descartes, S. Tommaso, Agostino, Aristotele e Platone* (Voghera, 1891); and *Della parte che ebbero la filosofia ed i filosofi nel risorgimento e rinnovamento dei popoli e delle nazioni* (Città di Castello, 1892). Following Rosmini, De Nardi identified three factors which bring about the production of philosophy: reflection, will, and feeling. Reflection takes place thanks to the presence of intuition, which subsequently enables perception to take place and then the activity of reason, while the physical element makes speculation possible in the various situations experienced by peoples. Neither mere intuition nor mere reflection are enough to produce the dispositions for philosophising. The coexistence of different factors renders a nation either fruitful in philosophy, sterile or in decline. De Nardi used these observations to explain the condition of philosophy in Italy after the Renaissance, without having to turn to idealist explanations. Against both sensationalism and positivism but also transcendental idealism, he exalts the ability of Rosmini's system to embrace all human knowledge and put forward the fundamental principles of thought. Hence the need for a historiography which emphasises the progression of thought and is organised according to the essential possibilities of the mind. He did not succeed, however, in producing a general history of philosophy which could spread Rosmini's vision in the Catholic culture of the late nineteenth century.

Giuseppe Buroni (1821–1885), an outstanding exponent of the Rosminianism from the north of Italy, was the author of an extremely dense work of a historical but also a theoretical nature: *Dell'Essere e del Conoscere. Studi su Parmenide, Platone e Rosmini* (Turin, 1877), which appeared in the collection of the *Memorie dell'Accademia delle scienze di Torino* (vol. XXIX, s. II). This work included a historical and theoretical framework of the evolution of Western ontological reflection, which Buroni believed was progressing towards the Rosminian conception of the triadic Being. But his perceptiveness from a specifically historical point of view was somewhat limited, and he was entirely oriented towards developing Rosmini's ontology as a philosophy suitable for that particular historical period characterised by the battle against idealism.

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7.1 Pasquale Galluppi (1770–1846)

Lettere filosofiche sulle vicende della filosofia relativamente a’ principi della conoscenza umana da Descartes insino a Kant inclusivamente
Storia della filosofia, vol. I: *Archeologia filosofica*

7.1.1 Baron Pasquale Galluppi was born in Tropea (Calabria) on 2nd April, 1770. He was educated privately, and in his autobiographical notes he reveals that the first works he read were Genovesi’s *Logica* and Euclid’s *Elements* (see *Lettere filosofiche*, Palermo, 1974, pp. 389–391). Later he studied Leibniz, Wolff, and Descartes. In 1788 he planned to take up a career as a lawyer, but did not complete his studies at the University of Naples, and his originally substantial wealth allowed him to follow his inclination to pure speculation. After studying Genovesi and Leibniz, Galluppi finally came to Condillac, whom he read around 1800, and these works induced him to put aside his theological interests and concentrate on the problem of knowledge. Galluppi was reserved by nature and did not take part in the political events of the Kingdom of Naples (then of the Two Sicilies); however, he did not conceal his support for liberal constitutionalist ideas and even wrote some short but significant works on them: *Sulla libertà compatibile con qualunque specie di governo* (an unpublished writing he produced during the reign of Joseph Bonaparte); *Della libertà di stampa* (1820); *Della libertà di coscienza* (1820); and *Lo sguardo dell’Europa sul Regno di Napoli* (1821). Despite his profession of liberal faith, he was never disturbed by the Bourbon government. After French domination, however, he ran into financial difficulties, which forced him to follow a much more modest lifestyle, and he was induced to work as a tax collector to provide for his many children. Galluppi only came to university teaching in 1831, when he was appointed “for his eminent merits” to the prestigious chair of logic and metaphysics at the University of Naples, winning fame both in Italy and abroad. In 1841 he became a member of the Royal Academy of France and a knight of the Legion of Honour. He died in Naples on 13th December, 1846.

7.1.2 Galluppi’s first work was an apologetic memoir (*Memoria apologetica*) written in 1795 in defence of a dissertation which he had read before the *Accademia degli Affaticati* in Tropea, and in which he held that the virtues of the pagans were totally meaningless because they were not directed towards God as supreme good (ed. by L. Meligrana, Soveria Mannelli, 2004). An apologetic religious concern was

never absent from Galluppi, but it did not condition his philosophical reasoning; he was alien to religious intransigence and believed that some of the fundamental principles of the Christian religion could be defined rationally. When in later life he was charged with auditing the books published in the Kingdom of Naples, he avoided all attitudes of intolerance. He did not, for example, join in the accusation of irreligion and anti-Catholic spirit which had been formally made against J. Tissot's *Histoire abrégée de la philosophie* (Paris, 1840), a work that had recently been translated into Italian by N. Corcia.

Galluppi's first philosophical work was a booklet of 84 pages published in Naples in 1807 under the title *Sull'analisi e la sintesi* and republished in Florence in 1935 edited by E. Di Carlo (new edition by A. Guzzo, Milan, 1970). The appendix also includes the article 'Sul metodo di studiare la filosofia intellettuale'. Several years later he published the lengthy *Saggio filosofico sulla critica della conoscenza, o sia analisi distinta del pensiero umano, con un esame delle più importanti questioni dell'Ideologia, del Kantismo e della Filosofia trascendentale* (Naples, 1819, vols I-II; Messina, 1822, vol. III; 1827, vol. IV; 1829, vol. V; 1832, vol. VI). A second, amended and enlarged edition was published in Naples in 1833; the work was later reprinted in 4 vols (Milan, 1846), and then in 5 vols, again in Milan in 1846. Between 1820 and 1827 Galluppi published the *Elementi di filosofia*, the work which made his system known all over Italy. The work is made up of 6 tomes in 3 volumes, which were also published over various years (Messina, 1820, tomes I-II; 1826, tomes III-V; 1827, tome VI). The work was appreciated for its clarity and came out in several editions: let us mention five-volume edition (2nd ed.: tome I, Messina, 1830; tomes II-V, Naples, 1832) and the three-volume edition (3rd ed., Milan, 1832).

In 1827 Galluppi published the work which brought him to attention: the *Lettere filosofiche sulle vicende della filosofia, relativamente a' principii della conoscenza umana da Descartes insino a Kant inclusivamente* (Messina, Pappalardo, 290 pages, containing 13 letters). Some general notes on the history of philosophy (not written by Galluppi) were added as a preface to a reprint of the work which appeared in Bologna in 1837. The second edition, "remarkably enlarged and improved by the author", appeared in Naples, published by Tramater in 1838, complete with a fourteenth letter and an 'Avvertimento relativo al signor Cousin' concerning the term "fatalism", which Galluppi had attributed to Cousin's doctrines in his translation and analysis of the *Fragments philosophiques* (*La filosofia di V. Cousin, tradotta dal francese ed esaminata dal bar. P. Galluppi*, Naples, 1831-1832, 2 vols; 2nd ed. 1836). The Naples edition appeared again in Florence in 1840, presenting as a preface Luigi Blanch's 'Discorso', a text already published in 1839 in the review *Progresso* (now in Blanch, pp. 371-391); there followed another two editions published in Florence (1842 and 1846). The first "northern" edition appeared in Milan in 1843. The work was also translated into French by L. Peisse: *Lettres philosophiques sur les vicissitudes de la philosophie relativement aux principes des connaissances humaines depuis Descartes jusqu'à Kant* (Paris, 1844). After this translation, no subsequent editions of the *Lettere* appeared until the one edited by A. Guzzo (Florence, 1923; 2nd ed. 1925). A new complete edition, edited by G. Bonafede, came out in Palermo in 1974: the complete text of the *Lettere* is

complemented by the *Considerazioni sull'idealismo trascendentale*, with some appendices containing letters, and the autobiography of 1822. We quote here from this last edition.

In 1841 Galluppi wrote a memoir on Fichte, in which he went back to some of the themes discussed in the *Lettere filosofiche*; the work appeared in Paris in 1841 in the collection *Mémoires de l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques. Savants étrangers* (tome III, pp. 31–154) under the title: *Mémoire sur le système de Fichte ou Considérations philosophiques sur l'Idéalisme transcendantal et sur le Rationalisme absolu*. This work was then published in Italian (Naples, 1841; Milan, 1845). Galluppi derived another two “philosophical letters” on Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel from this long work, which appeared in the review *Museo*, I (1841), vol. I, pp. 23–38 (repr.: *Museo di letteratura e filosofia (1841–1843)*, Naples, 1983) and then again in E. Di Carlo, ‘Due lettere ignorate di P. Galluppi su Fichte, Schelling ed Hegel’, *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica*, XXIV (1932), pp. 363–372. These letters are quoted in full in Guzzo’s edition of the *Lettere filosofiche*, labelled as letters 15 and 16, and are now also included in P. Galluppi, *Saggi e polemiche* (Genoa, 1991), pp. 257–269.

After he was appointed to teach at the University of Naples, Galluppi mainly produced works of a didactic nature. In Naples in 1832–1834 he published the three volumes of *Lezioni di logica e di metafisica, ad uso della R. Università degli studi di Napoli* (which came out in several editions). He then published four volumes of the *Filosofia della volontà* (Naples, 1832–1834, vols I–II; 1839–1840, vols III–IV), which was republished in 3 vols (Milan, 1846). His last substantial work was the *Storia della filosofia*, only the first volume of which appeared, entitled *Archeologia filosofica* (Naples, Barone, 1842, pp. xix–286; Milan, Silvestri, 1847). This ambitious undertaking remained unfinished because the author, already in his old age, found it difficult to draw together the large amount of information he had collected over his years of study and research and to form it into a complete historical treatise. The only edited volume is printed with a degree of inaccuracy, containing frequent typographical errors and a faulty pagination. In letters to Baldassarre Poli, the elderly Galluppi informs his colleague of the general plan of the work, declaring himself hopeful of completing it; cf. B. Poli, *Cenni sulla vita e sulle opere del barone P. Galluppi*, p. 5. According to Jacopo Bernardi (‘*Illustri italiani*’, II, ‘P. Galluppi’, pp. 328–329 and 332), the *Storia della filosofia* had been designed to consist of twelve volumes. The first and only volume, *Archeologia filosofica*, was republished immediately after the death of the author, preceded by the ‘Elogio funebre’ written by Enrico Pessina (Milan, Silvestri, 1847), pp. XL–431; new ed. by G. Tortora, A.M. Macchione, and L. Meligrana (Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2017).

During the last years of his life (1839–1846), Galluppi published several articles on themes relating to the history of philosophy (Spinozism, the controversy between Leibniz and Clarke over the notion of space, contemporary French philosophy, ...) in magazines, which have now been collected and edited by F. Ottonello in P. Galluppi, *Saggi e polemiche* (Genoa, 1991). A large number of more or less systematic writings (notes, drafts) are found in the material that his family donated to

the *Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele III"* in Naples, thanks to the mediation of Paolo Emilio Tulelli. Scholars (in particular Eugenio Di Carlo, who edited several fragments from Galluppi's unpublished writings) have frequently drawn on this unpublished material, although the new way in which it has been classified according to theoretical criteria makes it difficult to use it to identify Galluppi's sources in the preparatory work to the *Storia della filosofia*.¹

7.1.3 Galluppi did not theorize his approach to the history of philosophy; although he limited himself to a few notes, his intention nevertheless clearly emerges. The plan which he conceived in his later years of writing a complete history of philosophy stems from the observation that there is a strict concatenation linking modern philosophical systems – from Descartes to Kant – and therefore that there is a need to compare this movement of ideas with the positions on the generation of the universe that were elaborated by the first philosophical schools in Greece: "The purpose of the History of Philosophy must be to trace the origin of Philosophy and to explain the subsequent genesis of the different philosophical systems" ('Prefazione' to the *Storia della filosofia*, edition of 1842, p. vii). The formation of philosophy takes place through the progressive universalisation of the problems raised both by common sense and by scientific thought. Philosophical knowledge, therefore, proceeds according to an increasing degree of abstraction and universalisation, in such a way as to allow the whole of reality to be comprehended. In order for its fulfilment, therefore, there must be an adequate historical development of humankind. Galluppi thus rejects the apriorism held by those who intended first to define philosophy and then to establish its possible developments; on the contrary, we should discern how human thought developed from common sense to scientific abstraction and subsequently to philosophical abstraction.

In accordance with this position, the first volume of his *Storia della filosofia* is entitled *Archeologia filosofica*, that is to say, the study of the origin of the world and humanity, with the rise of the arts and the sciences (edition of 1842, p. xix). In this volume, he dwells in particular over the doctrines relating to the singularity or the plurality of worlds and their eternity or origin by creation. He is convinced that the specific character of ancient speculation was that it dealt with explaining the world. A further and more refined step in the development of philosophical reflection placed man at the centre from which the comprehension of reality radiated. Hence, for Galluppi, historical enquiry appears to consist of the progression of the two opposing fundamental problems of philosophy, the world, and knowledge: external reality and thought. His *Lettere filosofiche*, the aim of which was to definitively clarify some essential points concerning the origin of the doctrines of knowledge, already reveals that Galluppi was very clear about what he wished to obtain from the study of systems. The history of philosophy is relatively independent, since it prepares for the philosopher material which can be useful to him in judging the

¹A description of the Galluppi collection in the *Biblioteca Nazionale* in Naples can be found in *Studi galluppiani*, ed. by C. Fiore and P. Rosolini (Cosenza, 1991), pp. 120–128.

historical course of thought and its currents to better prepare the explanation of his theories. The history of philosophy does not in itself provide any necessary result to make him adhere to a certain viewpoint. However large modern philosophical systems may be, they also contain mistakes that the historian must report and not accept. The neutrality shown by the scholar who describes the appearance of systems and their contrasts does not mean that the philosopher, whose task it is to judge, does not have clear ideas about the reasons which may induce him to accept or reject certain positions.

7.1.4 *Lettere filosofiche sulle vicende della filosofia relativamente a’ principi della conoscenza umana da Descartes insino a Kant inclusivamente*
Storia della filosofia, vol. I: Archeologia filosofica

7.1.4.1 The *Lettere filosofiche* contains a series of letters addressed to the canon Goffredo Fazzari, who taught at the Seminary of Tropea. The fourteen letters published in the 1838 edition are divided into two groups: in the first group (letters 1–7) Galluppi illustrates the vicissitudes of modern thought from Descartes to Kant following the development of empiricism, sensationalism, and critical philosophy; the second group (letters 8–14) describes the line of development from rationalism to scepticism. Letters 15 and 16, which, as we have said, date from the 1840s, deal with the doctrines of Fichte and Schelling and Hegel’s “pantheism”. In the second work examined here, the *Archeologia filosofica*, Galluppi prefers to adopt a more systematic approach and subdivides his work into nine chapters structured into paragraphs with their own footnotes. After the ‘Prefazione’ (pp. v–xix), in the first chapter he presents “the different opinions formulated in Antiquity concerning the origin of the universe and humankind” (1842 edition, pp. 1–9); in the second and third chapters he documents the absence in Antiquity of a definite idea of creation, from the remotest cosmogonies up to Plato (pp. 9–123); the fourth chapter deals with the concept of the eternity of the world from Aristotle onwards (pp. 124–156); the fifth chapter quotes in full the first three chapters of Ocellus Lucanus’ work on the nature of the universe as an example of a treatment of the eternity of the world (pp. 157–177); the sixth chapter examines Aristotle’s arguments in support of the theory of the eternity of the world (pp. 178–200); the seventh chapter continues to discuss this theme and presents Proclus’ arguments, making a clear distinction between these and Plato’s arguments (pp. 201–266); the eighth chapter illustrates the Stoic theory of the periodic eternity of the world (pp. 267–277); and the final chapter examines the hypothesis of the infinity of eternal worlds, which had been put forward by atomism in particular (pp. 277–286). The work ends with an index of the first volume (pp. 287–300).

7.1.4.2 In the *Lettere filosofiche*, the basic scheme of periodization is closely linked to the definition of philosophy. Philosophy is “the science of that which is”, that is, “the science of man, of the world, of God”. These words, written by Galluppi to his friend, the canon Goffredo Fazzari, are further clarified in the following explanation: “the knowledge of the means we have for knowing is certainly a knowledge preliminary to the science of things. From this it follows that philosophy can be

viewed in two respects: either *as the science of things* or *as the science of human science*" (*Lettere filosofiche*, 1974 edition, p. 60). Galluppi defines the first as "objective" science and the second as "subjective" science. "But if philosophy is the first science, which must contain the legislation of all the other sciences, then we can easily see that it is necessary to view it in the second respect. This is the intention of the well-known maxim formulated in Antiquity: *Know yourself*" (p. 2). The idea of philosophy as an objective science is a product of the ancient world: although the intuition that philosophy should mainly deal with the "legislation of the sciences", that is, of the knowing subject, can be traced back to Socrates, ancient thought considered man to be the *object* of philosophy, which investigates the world, rather than as an active subject taking part in the process of knowledge and capable of laying the foundations of the sciences; "subjective philosophy", instead, is a result of modern thought. This division of human thought into two great periods was to be taken up again by Galluppi in his *Storia della filosofia*.

In the fragment which deals with Blanch's memoir on Stoicism (1842), Galluppi sets out a dynamic periodization of human thought. In commenting on Blanch's description of the nature of Stoicism, he observes that "the course followed by the moral world, both on a contemplative and an emotional plane, is nothing other than a series of actions and reactions following on from one another; for the reaction that follows the first action becomes itself an action that provokes a second reaction, and so on. Amid this series of actions and reactions there arise intermediate and conciliatory systems, which in philosophy, on a speculative plane, are either *Syncretism* or *Eclecticism*". This "law" of the development of ethics also applies to theoretical thought. "The first steps taken by human Reason in the study of nature produced *Dogmatism*; then a huge variety of opinions emerged, none of which had solid foundations. A reaction followed that first action of bold, proud reason, and since it was greater than the action, the result was *Scepticism*: after various vicissitudes, this reaction originated reasonable *Eclecticism*; the legitimate reasons of human knowledge were examined, and ways were found to affirm nothing unless a legitimate reason was adduced. False extremes ordinarily succeed one another, one following its direct opposite. Sometimes brilliant minds have been examples of action and reaction taking place at the same time" (Blanch, pp. 510–511).

For Galluppi, this sort of eclecticism is a way of asserting the rights of philosophical criticism, avoiding the extremes of dogmatism and scepticism. Indeed, in dwelling upon the opposition in ancient thought between the principles of duty and happiness, Galluppi acknowledges that Stoicism is a vigorous reaction which tries to oppose the "action of human corruption" and that it reappeared later on, in the modern age, in a revisited version thanks to Kant's moral duty; but what makes the difference is that the Stoics "placed happiness in the exercise of one's duty", whereas Kant distinguished between duty and happiness, "which he considered to be separable from virtue in this life" (Blanch, pp. 512–513). Galluppi thus finds the first traces of a dogmatic nature in ancient thought, in the cosmological doctrines in particular. He sees scepticism reappearing repeatedly in ancient philosophy and discerns a moment of partial rational reconciliation in Plato and Aristotle. Stoicism

appears to be a “dogmatic” reaction to hedonism, which is related to a sceptical vision. Even Christian and medieval philosophy contained elements of dogmatism, scepticism, and reconciliation. Modern philosophy started with scepticism, as a reaction to ancient and medieval dogmatism. Descartes introduced the current of rationalism, and Locke that of empiricism. Then these two currents intersected in Kant’s critical philosophy, which was followed by transcendental idealism, which took the form of absolute rationalism. For Galluppi, eclecticism was destined to re-propose spiritualism in his own time, in an updated version; it did not indicate any particular philosophical current, therefore, but the human mind’s fundamental aspiration to find solutions far from idealism, critical philosophy, and materialism.

7.1.4.3 The underlying theme of *Archeologia filosofica* concerns the concept of the origin of the cosmos and its structure. Cosmology, not epistemology, marked the beginnings of philosophizing. Philosophy developed at a moment in which the problem of knowledge was brought to the foreground, but this did not take place in ancient thought, which enquired into the world and man considered as a part of it, as a natural being. This approach seems dogmatic because it does not provide a preliminary enquiry into the actual powers and limits of knowledge. Galluppi acknowledges that philosophers like Plato and Aristotle sensed the need for knowledge to be critically oriented, but it was precisely in cosmology that they tended to privilege inappropriate visions of the world. Creationism was not put forward as a hypothesis on the origin of the world, and Galluppi believed this was an obstacle to the very development of philosophy: in the overall revival of ancient thought in medieval Christian civilisation and then in modern thought, the idea of the eternity of the world was preserved in order to oppose creationism, and as a reaction this frequently provoked a rejection of the ancient philosophers.

Modern philosophy on the other hand arose with the need to compare the different faculties of man, to describe the dynamics of knowledge. The rejection of dogmatism became explicit. Descartes was the archetype of this rejection; he was the one who “established the age of resurgence” of the science of the self, that is, true philosophy (*Lettere*, edition of 1974, p. 2). However, in various places in his works, in the *Saggio* in particular, Galluppi credits Condillac with having convinced him that the starting point of philosophy is an analysis of the self. Descartes was therefore the initiator of modern thought, although he was not the most radical writer representative of this idea. The form of the “letter” allows Galluppi to examine the different approaches to the problem of knowledge which had been formulated from Descartes onwards, without having to provide unnecessary explanations of subdivisions into schools and currents. The first letter is entitled ‘The direction taken by philosophy in the age of Descartes’ (pp. 60–69); the second deals with Locke’s philosophy (pp. 70–82); the third explains ‘The way in which Condillac solved the new problem of philosophy’ (pp. 84–96); the fourth letter is entitled ‘The viewpoint to which Leibniz’ criticism of Locke’s work reduced the question of the principles of our knowledge’ (pp. 98–110). The fifth letter discusses the method used by Kant for solving the problem of sensibility and pure forms: ‘How Kant, following the same direction as Condillac and adopting Leibniz’ principle on necessary

knowledge, presented the problem of philosophy in a different way – Transcendental aesthetics’ (pp. 112–121). The sixth letter is devoted to Kant’s twelve categories (pp. 123–130), while the seventh illustrates ‘How Kant constructs the visible nature’ (pp. 132–140).

The second group of letters deals with rationalism and scepticism. After presenting Kant’s doctrine of experience, Galluppi observes that Hume created the impulse which allowed Kant to achieve his transcendental doctrine. Indeed, the pure forms of the intellect are a response to the denial of the possibility of grasping relationship of causation between phenomena. In the eighth letter, entitled ‘Observations on the previous doctrines. Results of the analysis of language’ (pp. 143–156), Galluppi examines the transition from a realistic conception of ideas (which admits contact between ideas and the realities they refer to) to a purely “ideal” conception, and refers to Antoine Arnauld, Claude Lancelot, and César Chesneau Dumarsais. With the ninth letter he comes to the heart of the problem: ‘The new problem Hume submitted to philosophy’ (pp. 157–175). Hume denied there was any possibility of concretely grasping, that is, grasping from experience, the principle of causation and attributed exclusively to habit a constant relation of causation between different representations of events which appear to us as contiguous. He therefore denied that either physics or metaphysics can constitute a science. There is no certainty about any existence, except that of the individual, who, however, cannot come to know himself as substance. Galluppi also mentions the contribution made by Malebranche’s occasionalism to the negation of causation (tenth letter: ‘Comparison between Hume’s doctrine and other previous doctrines. Malebranche, Bayle, Berkeley’, pp. 177–200). Malebranche denied that true causation emanates from bodies; we can conclude, therefore, that it does not exist and that, if it is perceived, it is merely the result of habit. This also applies to Berkeley: the fact that perceived realities do not have a physical reality but only a phenomenal one is a good reason to affirm the nonexistence of an actual link between phenomena and reality, and between reality and reality. In conclusion, what induced Kant to formulate his transcendental view was not only Hume’s scepticism but also all those doctrines, proper to modern thought, which obstruct the relationship between natural reality and experiential datum. The very negation of metaphysics means that the unconditioned cannot be reached by means of knowledge, because there is no relationship between knowledge of particular reality and reality in its entirety and extensibility beyond its limits. These conclusions were opposed by the school of Reid and Dugald Stewart, which maintained that the notion of efficient, or metaphysical, cause, is not found in the effective relationship between phenomena but rather in the human intellect. The description of the ‘philosophy of common sense’ is the theme of the eleventh letter: ‘How Reid and his disciples combat Hume’s scepticism’ (pp. 201–216).

Kant’s transcendental philosophy was the result therefore of the combination of the Scottish school with Hume’s positions. Metaphysical causation is subjective for both Kant and Reid. Kant believed he could overcome Hume’s objections relating to the knowledge of the events of experience by positing causation as an instinctive conviction proper to the subject. If Kant thought that Reid had gone astray, then, observes Galluppi, he is wrong. The synthetic nature of principles is accepted by

both Reid and Kant and they share the transcendental point of view as a solution to sceptical criticisms, as stated in the conclusions to the twelfth letter, entitled ‘How Hume’s doctrine and Reid’s doctrine led Kant to transcendentalism’ (pp. 218–228). Galluppi had to acknowledge, however, that Reid aimed to posit the existence of causation and of all the laws of nature as an objective datum; but this was certainly not the position held by Kant, who believed that all the connections between the data of experience are subjective and are guaranteed by transcendental subjectivity.

In the thirteenth letter, ‘Kant’s doctrine on the possibility of metaphysics or transcendental dialectic’, Galluppi observes that in Kant neither experience nor metaphysical enquiry achieves any extra-subjective certainty (pp. 230–258). Reid’s position basically confirmed that Hume had been right in denying the direct possibility of grasping the relationships between experienced realities, and it transferred this possibility to common sense, which is both subjective and objective. But this position could not be ultimately assimilated to that of Kant. The negation of metaphysics by means of the critique of the three ideas of reason shows that Kant did not intend to affirm any ability of the mind to grasp by inspiration the truth of the notions underlying experience nor any ability of reason to proceed on its own. Reason thinks it can govern unconditioned notions using the data of experience obtained through the intervention of categories, thanks to reasoning regarding the self (categorical syllogism), the world (hypothetical syllogism), and God (disjunctive syllogism). In the light of Kantian thought, Galluppi proves that this belief is also unfounded and, following Kant’s arguments word for word, he arrives at the total destruction of all certainty. For him, philosophy must firmly rest on correctly understood experience and reject all deviation from this. It is essential for philosophical knowledge to establish the centrality of a subject who grasps the data of experience (and analyses them in order to understand the realities they originate from), his own substantiality, and his own spiritual reality. The study of knowledge must join two undisputed realities: the self and the reality that finds confirmation in the self.

In the fourteenth letter, ‘The outcome of critical philosophy – Spontaneity of reason: an idea of the present state of philosophy in Europe’, Galluppi examines the development of transcendentalism in Fichte and then in Schelling and Hegel. Kant’s system contains the contradiction of dogmatism and scepticism, which are both present in it. The statement affirming the impossibility of knowing things in themselves is of a dogmatic nature, especially if related to the other statement affirming that critical philosophy knows the source, nature, and limits of knowledge. Critical philosophy is in itself contradictory. Cousin attempted to overcome it by positing Reason – seen as impersonal and intuitive truth accepted by the whole of humanity – as containing a criterion for affirming the truth of the progression of both experience and reason. However, Cousin’s (and Jouffroy’s) position is not entirely convincing because it admits dogmatically that the principles of human knowledge cannot be demonstrated, even though they appear to be certain in the light of a conviction which is not rational but intuitive. According to Galluppi, the only certain element of knowledge is consciousness, but it does not take the form of an *a priori*

element. Experience obtains what is needed by knowledge in order to be able to operate: experience can be primitive or comparative, that is, originally objective and then subjective and objective in the elaboration carried out within the consciousness (pp. 259–282).

The letters on German transcendental philosophy and the memoir entitled *Sul sistema di Fichte, ovvero Considerazioni filosofiche sull'idealismo trascendentale e sul razionalismo assoluto* constitute an organic whole, from which it is possible to deduce that Galluppi considered transcendental philosophy to be absolute rationalism resulting from Kant's claim to posit apriority as the fundamental condition of all knowledge. Galluppi sees a contradiction in Fichte's pure I, in which logical order and metaphysical order are confused. Of considerable interest is the parallel Galluppi creates between Kant and later thought: both critical philosophy and transcendental (which Galluppi frequently calls "transcendent") idealism are forms of absolute rationalism, in which reason is posited as the only point of reference, without any acknowledgement of the value of an encounter with reality in itself. Moreover, idealism and scepticism are related to pantheism. In the second part of the memoir for the *Institut Royal de France*, Galluppi examines the connections between ancient scepticism and immanentistic views and concludes with the following words: "It seems that in Alemannia absolute rationalism has gone through all possible phases. After having been applied to the generation of knowledge, it turned to the generation of existence, which it identified with the generation of science: its first result was *transcendent idealism*. As we have remarked, this rendered an abstraction real by positing the automatic action of will without an object pursued by will. But abstraction had not yet reached the peak beyond which it is impossible to rise. This peak is *universal Existence*" (p. 350).

7.1.4.4 Galluppi did not follow the same method in both his works. In the *Storia della filosofia*, he clearly followed the model of the eighteenth-century general history, adding abundant quotations in the notes. By contrast, in the *Lettere* (in which, right from dedication, he explicitly declares his aim "to provide a model of *philosophical history*") he abandoned the scholarly philological apparatus and went back to the theoretical historical approach he had used in his *Saggio filosofico sulla critica della conoscenza*. In the preface to the latter work, Galluppi had declared that an analysis of the problem of knowledge cannot omit reflection on Kant's transcendental philosophy and empiricism; but these philosophies must be discussed bearing in mind their antecedents in modern thought. Galluppi recognises that there is "a scarcity of books on this matter for an Italian", but believes it is possible to give an adequate general picture of "modern Alemannic philosophers" by resorting to works like Degérando's history of philosophy and *La philosophie de Kant* (1801) by Villers (*Saggio filosofico*, Naples, 1819, I, pp. 13–14; in his translation of Cousin's *Fragments philosophiques*, Galluppi also mentions the French translation of Buhle). Indeed, the *Lettere* take up again the same themes addressed in the *Saggio filosofico*, although in the more readable and discursive form of the letter: modern thought is examined and discussed in its theoretical worth and there is also a reconstruction of its distinctive great systems. Galluppi does not aim to place the systems in the peri-

ods in which they were formulated, but rather to set out different doctrines according in a chronological order, classifying them from a theoretical point of view and providing a systematic comparison between them, with the object of providing a more accurate account of the problem of knowledge.

7.1.5 In his commemoration of Galluppi to Neapolitan youth, the Jesuit Carlo Maria Curci underlined Galluppi’s anti-Kantian positions. The fact that Galluppi’s thought was not close to that of Thomas Aquinas (whom he knew and quoted abundantly) did not stop Curci from praising the *Lettere filosofiche* as a “very accurate and acute account of the most important systems from Descartes up to Rosmini”, and from lamenting the failure to complete the *Storia della filosofia*, a work which would have been “the first Catholic work of this genre” (Curci, *Orazione funebre*, pp. 16–17). In Italy, Galluppi’s contribution to historiography was judged in different ways. Luigi Blanch presented his work on the history of philosophy as an integral part of his thought, defining the *Lettere filosofiche* as an example of historical methodology capable of describing the essential stages of human thought from the point of view of its fundamental problem, which was psychological and cognitive (see Blanch, pp. 377–388). According to Blanch, Galluppi’s greatest merit was to have founded an “experimental” philosophy on the basis of an accurate enquiry into the history of philosophy: in Italy no other thinker had created such a penetrating history of philosophy (*Sull’Istoria della filosofia antica di Enrico Ritter*, in Blanch, pp. 285–287). Luigi Palmieri, who succeeded Galluppi to his university chair, stated that the *Lettere filosofiche* “alone would demonstrate how much our philosopher had reflected on the doctrines of the whole Cartesian age and how he had subtly discovered the logical relations connecting them, [...] in such a way that we can see precisely how one thought derives from another, and how the chronological order always conceals a marvellous logical order, so that the various philosophical doctrines finally appear to form part of a whole” (Palmieri, *Elogio storico*, pp. 13–14).

Adverse criticisms were expressed, however, by the young Neapolitans educated in eclecticism, whose positions we have already encountered. They showed considerable respect for Galluppi and appeared to agree with Gioberti in defining him as “the venerable Nestor of Italian wisdom”.² But this acknowledgement did not shield Galluppi from their most radical criticism: having long occupied the most important chair of philosophy in the University of Naples without having formulated any new ideas, as Gatti explicitly stated in *Museo* (Gentile, II, pp. 547–549). Their main criticism was aimed at the *Storia della filosofia*, a work which had been long promised, but once produced, proved to be manifestly disappointing. Gatti pointed out that, with the first volume of his *Storia della filosofia*, Galluppi had given a poor account

²V. Gioberti, *Degli errori filosofici di Antonio Rosmini*, I, ed. by U. Redanò (Milan, 1939), p. 18. Elsewhere Gioberti expresses a positive view of Galluppi’s philosophy because, together with Manzoni, it initiated a “religious resurgence” in Italy by removing sensationalism and supporting moderate eclecticism; cf. V. Gioberti, *Il Gesuita moderno*, ed. by M.F. Sciacca, IV (Milan, 1941), p. 237, note.

of his erudition and philosophical criticism, so much so that the work was judged to be “extremely poor” even by “those who had been so generous as to consider in earnest his uncertain psychology” (‘Filosofia de’ SS. Padri’, *Museo*, n.s., XV (1858), vol. I, p. 110). In his review of the *Storia della filosofia*, Cusani stated in turn that Galluppi had unjustifiably placed the element of empiricism before his historical reconstruction. This reconstruction should instead be shaped *a priori*, since the systems present in history must be understood and judged in the light of a “pure” idea; in his *Archeologia filosofica*, on the other hand, Galluppi placed the thought elaborated by the world and by man as something separate from the science of thought (Cusani, pp. 412–415).

Although Spaventa included Galluppi in the trio of innovators of Italian philosophy (Galluppi, Gioberti, Rosmini), he seems to have agreed with Cusani and Gatti. In the lessons he held in Naples in 1862, he affirmed that in his work on the critique of knowledge Galluppi “reveals enormous erudition and great discernment”; but then added: “He has a good knowledge of the history of philosophy from Descartes to Kant, but not of the Greeks and the Germans. He lacks knowledge of the foundation and crown of the edifice of the history of philosophy” (*La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea*, ed. by G. Gentile (Bari, 1909), p. 144). Even more radical criticisms were made by the other Hegelian school active in Naples, the “orthodox” one (close to Berlin’s “liberal” Hegelian school). After judging Galluppi’s position as basically eclectic, Raffaele Mariano, a pupil of Augusto Vera, claimed that Galluppi’s explanation of Kant was a misinterpretation of critical philosophy; cf. R. Mariano, *La philosophie contemporaine en Italie* (Paris, 1868), pp. 32–33. As a result, Galluppi’s contribution to historiography fell rapidly into oblivion. Also contributing to this was the change in the cultural situation in Naples and the surrounding area, where the advent of Hegelianism induced scholars to study German historiography of philosophy. Indeed, Francesco Fiorentino affirmed that “with Galluppi philosophy starts to revive in our land” and that “the historical orientation is of capital importance in his books” (*La filosofia contemporanea in Italia* (Naples, 1876), pp. 4–5). But the relative success enjoyed by Galluppi thanks to Fiorentino and Giovanni Gentile did not lead to a revival of his theoretical approach or his historiographical perspective, which remained linked to the experience of his time; it did however allow Italian thought to take a respectable place among the more highly ranked German and French philosophers, but not to aspire a position of preeminence.

7.1.6 On Galluppi’s life and works: EF, V, pp. 4552–4554; M. Di Napoli, in DBI, LI (1998), pp. 748–751; P.E. Tulelli, ‘Intorno alla dottrina e alla vita politica del barone P.G. Notizie ricavate da alcuni suoi scritti inediti e rari’, *Atti della R. Accademia di scienze morali e politiche di Napoli*, II (1865), pp. 101–121; Id., ‘Sopra gli scritti inediti del barone P. Galluppi’, *ibid.*, III, pp. 81–131; A. Guzzo, ‘I manoscritti galluppiani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli’, *Rivista critica di cultura calabrese*, II (1922), pp. 302–350. P. Galluppi, *Saggi e polemiche. La collaborazione ai periodici dal 1828 al 1845*, ed. by F. Ottonello (Genoa, 1991), pp. 25–77 <<http://www.giutor.com/galluppi/bp.html>; <http://www.giutor.com/galluppi/bs>.

<http://www.dif.unige.it/sto/dati/bibliografia.php?Nome=Galluppi>>; F. Ottonello, ‘Note critiche’, in Galluppi, *Saggi*, pp. 17–20; P. Galluppi, *Lettere private, inedite e rare*, ed. by F. Ottonello (Milan, 2006), pp. 11–42 <<http://www.dif.unige.it/sto/dati/bibliografia.php?Nome=Galluppi>>; S. Venezia, ‘Galluppi, Pasquale’, in *Enciclopedia italiana. Il contributo italiano alla storia del pensiero. Filosofia* (Rome, 2012), pp. 390–398.

Commemorations: P. Borrelli and P.E. Tulelli, *Esequie del Barone P. G. Discorsi pronunziati [...] presso il letto funebre del Bar. P. Galluppi* (Naples, 1846); E. Pessina, *Elogio funebre* (Naples, 1847); C.M. Curci, *Orazione funebre alla memoria di P. Galluppi recitata in Napoli li 21 gennaio 1847 nella Chiesa di S. Orsola a Chiaja* (Florence, 1847); L. Palmieri, *Elogio storico del barone P. Galluppi* (Naples, 1847); V. Cousin, ‘P. Galluppi’, *Omnibus letterario*, 29th May 1847, XV (translation of the commemorative discourse pronounced by Cousin before the Academy of France and published in *Journal des économistes* in February 1847); B. Poli, *Cenni sulla vita e sulle opere del barone P. Galluppi* (Padua, 1847); J. Bernardi, ‘Illustri italiani. P. Galluppi’, *Il Cimento*, 1852, n. 2, pp. 313–332.

Reviews of the *Saggio filosofico* published in: *Biblioteca analitica*, n. 42 (Naples, 1820); *Revue Encyclopédique* (June 1821), p. 586; *Biblioteca italiana*, X (1825), tome xxxix, pp. 3–14. – Reviews of the *Lettere filosofiche*: G.D. Romagnosi, *Biblioteca italiana*, XIII (1838), vol. I, pp. 163–185; XIV (1839), vol. LIII, pp. 180–199; L. Blanch, *Progresso*, VIII (1839), vol. xxii, pp. 5–27 (repr. in Blanch, pp. 371–391) – Reviews of the *Storia della filosofia*: S. Cusani, *Museo*, n.s., II (1843), vol. iv, pp. 222–234 (repr. in Cusani, II, pp. 407–415). A review of the *Considerazioni filosofiche sull’idealismo trascendentale* by S. Gatti appeared in *Museo*, II (1842), vol. iv, pp. 9–32.

On Galluppi’s thought: Gentile, I, pp. 594–632; G. Di Napoli, *La filosofia di P. Galluppi* (Padua, 1947); Garin, III, pp. 1074–1091 and 1100–1101; Oldrini, pp. 62–82 and *passim*; *Studi galluppiani. Atti dei Convegni Tropeani per il centenario della morte ed il bicentenario della nascita di P. Galluppi* (Tropea, 1979); *Studi galluppiani. Atti del Convegno Galluppiano di Tropea* [28th–30th March 1987] (Cosenza, 1991); *Gli Elementi di filosofia di Pasquale Galluppi. Fra ragione teoretica e metodologia storica*, ed. by S. Venezia (Soveria Mannelli, 2007).

Noteworthy are the studies published by E. Di Carlo: ‘Lettere inedite di P. Galluppi a V. Cousin’, *GCFI*, X (1929), pp. 61–71, 140–45, and 494–99; ‘A quali fonti abbia attinto il Galluppi la conoscenza della filosofia di Kant’, *RFN*, XXIII (1931), pp. 403–409; ‘Due lettere ignorate di P. Galluppi su Fichte, Schelling e Hegel’, *RFN*, XXIV (1932) pp. 361–372; ‘Giudizi di P. Galluppi sulla filosofia di Hegel’, *Archivio di storia della filosofia italiana*, II (1933), pp. 361–368; ‘Rapporti tra L. Peisse e P. Galluppi’, *Annali della R. Università di Perugia*, IX (1933), s. v, vol. XLII; ‘La traduzione francese delle *Lettere filosofiche* di P. Galluppi’, *ibid.*, X (1934), s. v, vol. XLII; *Una memoria inedita di P. Galluppi sulla storia della teodicea filosofica* (Padua, 1957).

On Galluppi and the historiography of philosophy: M.A. Rocchi, *P. Galluppi storico della filosofia. Con un saggio di bibliografia galluppiana* (Palermo, 1934); R. D’Auria, *Il Galluppi interprete di Kant* (Rome, 1942); D. Cioccoli, *Il concetto di*

storia della filosofia nelle ricerche storiche di P. Galluppi (Urbino, 1964); W. Cariddi, 'Galluppi critico di Fichte', *RR*, LXVI (1972), pp. 13–26; D. Vircillo, 'Un filosofo calabrese interprete di Kant: P. Galluppi', in *La tradizione kantiana in Italia* (Messina, 1986), II, pp. 669–687; G. Tortora, *P. Galluppi e il materialismo del Settecento francese* (Naples, 1989); F. Costantino, 'Galluppi interprete di Bayle', in 'Studi in onore di Franco Crispini', *Bollettino filosofico. Filosofia e storia delle idee*, XV (1999), pp. 123–130; F. Cerrato, 'Uno storicismo moderato. Pasquale Galluppi interprete di Kant e Spinoza', *GCFI*, XCVI (2015), pp. 336–354.

7.2 Antonio Rosmini-Serbati (1797–1855)

Nuovo Saggio sull'origine delle idee (first part)

Storia comparativa e critica de' sistemi intorno al principio della morale

Del divino nella natura

Saggio storico-critico sulle categorie

7.2.1 Antonio Rosmini was born in Rovereto on 24th March, 1797. His teacher of philosophy, mathematics, and physics was the clergyman Pietro Orsi. A brilliant and dedicated student, the young Rosmini soon devoted himself to the study of the classics and the great Fathers and Scholastics. In his *Il giorno di solitudine* (1813–1817), ed. by G. Lorizio (Rome, 1993), he outlined a sort of project to enable philosophy to aid the cause of the Christian religion (see now the critical edition by S.F. Tadini, in *EC*, 53). After this work, which remained unfinished, he made several plans for works of a historical and encyclopaedic nature, revealing his systematic intelligence. From 1816 to 1819 he attended courses in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Padua; decisive for his education on the history of philosophy was his acquaintance with Cesare Baldinotti in Padua.³ In 1821 he was ordained priest and in 1822 he received a doctorate in Theology and Canon Law with a thesis on a rather unusual subject: *An in Sybillinis oraculis verae aliquae fuerint de Christo praedictiones*.⁴ In this work Rosmini aimed to demonstrate the presence of “seeds of the Word” in the prophecies of the Sibyls (in reality, the *Sibylline Books* had been elaborated during the Christian era and therefore contained pseudo-prophecies of the advent of Christ).

Once he had finished his theological studies, the young Rosmini decided to pursue the study of ethical and political questions. His early concentration on the history of humanity turned into a deep interest in the study of legal structures and the different forms of communal living, to which he was able to devote himself thanks to a family income and its well-stocked library, which he added to himself during

³On Baldinotti's historico-philosophical activity, cf. *Models*, III, pp. 328–336.

⁴The thesis is now published in P. Salomoni, 'Rosmini e le Sibille', *Rosmini studies*, VI (2019), pp. 183–227 <<http://rosministudies.centrostudirosmini.it/index.php/rosministudies/issue/view/9>>.

his stay in Padua. It was in this period that he also became particularly interested in theodicy, and indeed his work *Della divina Provvidenza nel governo de' beni e de' mali temporali* dates from 1826. He then moved to Milan, where he established contact with Alessandro Manzoni, who greatly motivated him to undertake historical and literary studies. During his period in Milan Rosmini came to a clear decision: before analysing human laws, it was necessary to determine with extreme clarity man's ability to reach the truth. The connection between action and truth became the aim of his studies in the period 1827–1830, which culminated in the *Nuovo Saggio sull'origine delle idee*. To the astonishment of his many of his Milanese "lay" friends, in 1828 he founded a religious congregation called the Institute of Charity, which was granted papal recognition in 1839; after the foundation of the Institute, Rosmini moved first to Domodossola and then to Stresa (1836) on Lake Maggiore. The phase of growth of the Institute coincided with Rosmini's intense philosophical production. He interrupted his studies only when he had to travel through Italy to deal with matters pertaining to the Institute. The Institute however soon aroused strong resistance, both on the part of the Austrian government and those religious orders (like the Society of Jesus) which considered it to be a danger for the Church because of the personality of its founder and his innovative ideas in the fields of philosophy, politics, and ethics.

In 1848–1849 Rosmini took part in the Risorgimento. The government of the Kingdom of Sardinia sent him to Rome on a diplomatic mission to set up an anti-Austrian political and military league of Italian states, which, however, ended in failure. Pope Pius IX, who had decided to create him Cardinal, detained him in Rome; Rosmini was thus involved in the events of the Papal States and followed the Pope when he fled from Rome to Gaeta. The conservative faction of the Roman curia, however, concocted accusations and actions against Rosmini's positions, taking advantage of the weakness of the Pope. Disappointed at having attempted in vain to convince the Pope to adopt a moderate position on the question of Italian independence and the Roman constitution and deeply saddened by the condemnation by the Congregation of the Index of his two ecclesiological and political works (*Delle cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa* and *La costituzione secondo la giustizia sociale*), Rosmini returned to Stresa in November 1849. Pius IX, who had not wished to adhere to Rosmini's moderate liberal positions but had preferred the reactionary orientation of the curia and the Secretary of State, Cardinal Antonelli, nevertheless intervened in his favour when the accusations against his speculative positions were vigorously renewed, once again fomented by the Jesuits (1850). This time the Congregation of the Index examined all of his writings (several of which dealt with the history of philosophy) impartially and extensively, and found in them nothing that was contrary to the faith, and ordered therefore that they could be "dismissed", making them available to readers again (1854). This enabled Rosmini, who was staying in Stresa, to recommence the *Teosofia*, an extremely wide-ranging work which he had started in 1846 but had interrupted in 1848. In the same period, he also went back to the study of history, but could not complete his great plan to write a work on ontology accompanied by the necessary research into the history of philosophy, because he fell seriously ill. He died in Stresa on 1st July, 1855.

Rosmini's thought met with a troubled destiny: while Pius IX was still alive (1875), the accusations against Rosmini's philosophical positions were renewed by some exponents of neo-Thomism, a current which was spreading to Italy and Germany. The object of these accusations was Rosmini's interest in modern thinkers, in particular Kant and Hegel (whom he had largely criticised). Indeed, the Neapolitan Hegelians (Spaventa, Fiorentino, and Jaja) interpreted Rosmini's philosophy as a position open to modern thought which exalted the innovative role (in a subjectivistic sense) of Kantian thought. The neo-Thomists (the most outstanding of which were the Jesuits G.M. Cornoldi, M. Liberatore, C. Mazzella, the Dominican T. Zigliara, and monsignor F. Satolli) therefore accused Rosmini's posthumous writings before the new Pope Leo XIII and the Congregation of the Holy Office; the *Teosofia* in particular was accused of rendering explicit those erroneous (pantheistic and ontologistic) doctrines which were contained in embryonic form or were disguised in works which had earlier been recognised as orthodox. The result of this campaign was the promulgation of a decree *Post obitum* (1887) which stated that forty propositions taken from the works of Rosmini did not "conform to the Catholic truth". In fact, this condemnation was caused by contingent reasons, which are by now obsolete, as has been officially recognised by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (*Nota sul valore dei decreti dottrinali concernenti il pensiero e le opere del Rev. Sac. Antonio Rosmini Serbati*, 1st July, 2001).

7.2.2 In his youth, Rosmini had nourished the idea of elaborating a vast general history of philosophy on the model of Brucker's history and true to the spirit of Bacon's encyclopaedism, but he did not manage carry out his plan. In the late 1820s Rosmini published a work in which he created a historical account of doctrines for the first time: *Nuovo Saggio sull'origine delle idee* (Rome, Salviucci, 1829–1830, 4 vols), new ed. (Milan, 1836), fifth and definitive ed. (Turin, Pomba, 1852–1853); now in EN, III–V, ed. by F. Orestano (Rome, 1934); in EC, 3–5, ed. by G. Messina (Rome, 2003–2004). Subsequently, in connection with the *Principj della scienza morale* (Milan, 1831; in EN, XXI, ed. by D. Morando, Milan, 1941; in EC, 23, ed. by U. Muratore, Rome, 1990), Rosmini drew up his *Storia comparativa e critica de' sistemi intorno al principio della morale* (Milan, 1837; Naples, 1844; then in EN and in EC together with the *Principj*). Later on, as a preparatory study for his great work, the *Teosofia*, he produced some other works on historiographical themes: the *Saggio storico critico sulle categorie*, published posthumously (Turin, 1883), together with the *Dialettica*, now in EC, 19, ed. by P.P. Ottonello (Rome, 1997); *Aristotele esposto ed esaminato*, posthumous (Turin, 1857), then in EN, XXIX–XXX, ed. by E. Turolla (Padua, 1963–1964), now in EC, 18, ed. by G. Messina (Rome, 1995); *Del divino nella natura*, published posthumous too (Intra, 1869); now in EC, 20, ed. by P.P. Ottonello (Rome, 1991). There is also a historical survey in *Psicologia* (Novara, 1846–1848), 2 vols; in EN, vols XV–XVIII, ed. by G. Rossi (Milan, 1941–1951); now in EC, 9–10/A, ed. by V. Sala, (Rome, 1988–1989). There is some analysis of doctrines and works and some works concerning historiographical methodology in the *Introduzione alla filosofia* (Casale, 1850), now in EN, II, ed. by U. Redanò (Rome, 1934); in EC, 2, ed. by P.P. Ottonello (Rome, 1979). Rosmini's

knowledge of the history of philosophy also emerges from the work *Delle cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa* (Lugano, 1848), now in EC, 56, ed. by A. Valle (Rome, 1981; 2nd ed. 1998); a critical edition has been edited by N. Galantino (Cinisello Balsamo, 1997). Finally, let us not forget that Rosmini approached historiographical questions in many of his letters. The *Epistolario completo* (Casale Monferrato, 1887–1894, 13 vols), will soon be replaced by a new critical edition directed by P. P. Ottonello, volumes I–II of which have already appeared, ed. by L. Malusa and S. Zanardi: A. Rosmini, *Lettere* (2 giugno 1813–19 novembre 1816) (Rome, 2015 = EC, 61); *Lettere* (27 novembre 1816–dicembre 1819) (Rome, 2016 = EC, 62).

7.2.3 Reflection on God and being is fundamental to Rosmini’s thought and it is at the root of his interest in ideas and the soul, and subsequently of his description of the moral order. In his “philosophical system”, the first element is an analysis of ideal being (the sciences of intuition), then an account of the products of perception (the sciences of perception: psychology and cosmology), and finally the complexity of reasoning, which defines the fields of knowledge: ontology, theology, and deontology (the sciences of reasoning). It follows from this that the sequences of a doctrinal nature starting from “ideology” have an equal right to be considered as those starting from theology. Rosmini did not believe that we can seek truth unless we already possess it from the point of view of the “form” of knowledge. We do not seek truth unless we already possess a very general intuition of it, that is, that “Idea of being” that makes knowledge possible and guides man towards truth viewed in its completeness: a “being” that does not conceal itself but reveals itself and even is an intellectual light; a “being” into which, in the course of history, philosophers have fruitfully enquired, although they have not always succeeded in understanding its primary role as the “form” of knowledge, an object of intuition, a condition essential to all objective knowledge.

Rosmini thinks that human speculation and even religiosity itself have always recognised both the divine Being as Truth and the “divine” (considered in the ideality of being present to the human mind) as a condition of truth. Particular cognitions are the result of intellective perception, which is in turn made possible by the union of the Idea of being with sensible data. In this way we come to increasingly complete and universal syntheses, until we reach the ultimate reason of all reality, the divine Being. This process makes it possible to outline the “system of truth” leading to the fullness of Being in the interpenetration of its three forms: the “ideal” form, the real form, and the moral form. For Rosmini (see in particular his *Del divino nella natura*), the metaphysics of the West, but also that of the East, is marked by the “ideality” of being as a condition of speculation and, through increasingly arduous trials, it proceeds to affirm the triadic character of being itself, which explains the relationship of knowledge with morality and the reality of the subject and the extra-subjective world. The historiography of philosophy is legitimated by the need to understand and interpret the stages in this search for Truth.

In his youth, Rosmini had made the “classification of principles” specific to research into the history of philosophy. In 1825, in his answer to the letter by

Bonelli, Rosmini explained that creating an account of the philosophical systems based on a division into the schools which followed on from one another in time and the doctrines proposed by the various leading figures leads to the risk of failing to fully grasp the essence of the philosophical problems which emerged in the various ages. By privileging an account in which the individual philosophers are examined one after the other, we end up by identifying a thinker with a particular system, which is not correct from a historical point of view (*Introduzione alla filosofia*, edition of 1979, p. 339). In this period, Hegel had already largely formulated his position, according to which the historical sequence in which systems are arranged fundamentally coincides with the “system” of the Idea in itself. Rosmini, who at that time had no knowledge of Hegel’s thought (he only began reading him in the 1830s), adopted, albeit unconsciously, a position directly opposed to that presented by Hegel in his Berlin lectures. Again in his letter to Bonelli, Rosmini declared that it will never be possible to create a perfect classification of the philosophical systems and a history of philosophy “until the perfection of philosophy itself has been attained”. But a comparison between perfect philosophy and the other “non-perfect or false philosophies” is impossible: it is only possible to establish a comparison between that which is certain (within the domains of the different principles that govern the different parts of philosophy) and the various philosophies, and point out the mistakes and falsehoods they fall into. “Before classifying the systems of philosophy, or of any other science, it is necessary to reduce these systems to only one principle, or, if this cannot be done, to reduce them to the fewest possible principles, and then to establish a different classification for each principle” (p. 348).

In a letter sent to Poli after the publication of the *Supplimenti*, Rosmini observed that the classifications Poli had proposed for the various positions of Italian thought did not always make it possible to distinguish between truth and error. In the history of Italian thought, we should discern “the dangers involved in the philosophical journeys attempted by human intelligence, but also the bold impulses, the shipwrecks, and the fortunate discoveries. Hence, if all this is absent from history, and if history, totally devoid of judgment, mixes up great, original minds with the common herd of philosophers, if it does not distinguish between the noble audacity of investigation and temerity, if it does not indicate those who attained the truth and those who perished on the way before reaching it, and, similarly, those who gave an order to the realm of philosophy and those who broke it up, and finally those who arranged it in an orderly way again with new and wiser laws, then it becomes not only cold and useless, but even pernicious” (p. 356). For Rosmini, only a “general” history of philosophy is possible, since monographs on writers or separate concepts and themes do not thoroughly fulfil the aim of historiographical activity. From this point of view, history cannot be separated from theoretical activity because only the incentive to seek the truth in itself in the systems of the past renders the efforts of the historian useful and meaningful.

In another context, this time a pedagogical one, in roughly the same period in which he wrote to Bonelli (1826), Rosmini stated: “Without philosophy, history is blind and becomes an extremely tedious coming and going of the human mind, a succession of opinions all of equal weight, or rather of equal flimsiness, without

ever distinguishing one opinion from other opinions which should be rightfully preferred. Without history, philosophy becomes so dry, so ungrounded, so far from the powers of the mind, that it can only be unfruitfully received by the memory and lie there like an awkward encumbrance or a seedbed of endless doubts and anxieties for the mind that endeavours itself to render fruitful those truths that men never attain unless they go through intermediary truths and often even through the whole immeasurable terrain of errors and dreams. History can therefore be defined as the vehicle of philosophy, while philosophy can be defined as the light of history" (*Sull'unità dell'educazione*, in *Scritti vari di metodo e di pedagogia* (Turin, 1883), pp. 53–54).

In 1829, after reading Cousin's preface to the French translation of Tennemann's manual of the history of philosophy, Rosmini understood that it was wrong to consider every systematic philosophical work as possessing its own intrinsic validity. Indeed, Cousin's position could be reduced to this principle: the different systems which are found in the history of philosophy are all already contained in the very essence of philosophy as natural tendencies of thought and its faculties; hence it would be detrimental or false to privilege one system over the others. For Rosmini, the philosophical value of the history of philosophy does not depend on the possibility of discovering in each system an "immortal" part of the truth that must be considered an essential contribution to the edifice of truth in its entirety. Indeed, each system cannot simply be considered as consisting of a true part and many imperfect and transient parts. The historian's work of extracting the portion of truth from each system runs the risk of condemning the systems themselves to uselessness, because, apart from that one portion of truth, nothing valid would remain in them (*Introduzione alla filosofia*, pp. 86–87). On the contrary, the human spirit has the right, or rather the duty, to judge the validity of the different systems relating to the truth and to reject false systems because they are based on intrinsically erroneous principles. The freedom of the spirit stems from its remaining in the truth and its ability to identify and reject error. Taking up again the considerations formulated in his letter to Luigi Bonelli, Rosmini observed: "In our view, a system is neither a name, nor some shreds pulled at random off the various bodies of doctrine; but it is an elevated principle with all its consequences". The plurality of philosophies does not always correspond to a plurality of systems. From a principle it is possible to derive many consequences which do not contradict one another and can therefore be understood in the light of only one system. Consequently, "if the supreme principle of a system is true, then the whole system must be accepted as true, and we just need to rectify its consequences in case they are not derived logically or to derive other consequences from it, thus developing and completing it: but if the supreme principle of a system is false, then the whole system must be considered false, and if we accidentally come across true things in it, then these things neither belong to it nor make it true" (p. 96; see also p. 88).

Rosmini continued his criticism of eclecticism observing that if we consider all the systems produced by the human spirit in the course of history to be true, even though they conflict with one another (seemingly, according to Cousin, or actually, according to Hegel), then the human spirit must be regarded as having been damaged by original sin, which disposes man to error through fatal temptation. Against

Cousin, who did not believe in original sin, Rosmini maintained polemically that error, in its occurring indefinitely, has a practical rather than a theoretical significance. In the first lines of his essay *Degli studi dell'autore*, he hinted at the disruptive presence of the Evil One among humans: "The human mind, although it has been created for truth, is nevertheless easily seduced by a principle which is foreign to it and is an enemy, inducing the mind with its stratagems to mistake the appearances of truth for truth; so that the will, whose master is the mind, instead of pursuing the good for which it has been created, grasps only the vain appearances of the good. Hence error and fault" (*Introduzione*, p. 15). With this reference to "the tempter", the spirit of evil, Rosmini therefore turns to a revealed entity and posits it as a real element necessary for understanding certain historical events as well as the dynamics of the history of philosophy itself. The reason why error, favoured by the principle of evil, occurs indefinitely is that it does not appear as it really is, but only in the shape of something that resembles truth.

The key to interpreting the history of philosophy, therefore, does not consist of considering as true and legitimate all the fundamental systems which have appeared in the course of time, but identifying the parallel presence of the "tradition of error beside the tradition of truth". These two traditions progress attacking each other; but this progress has a "dialectical form" because each doctrine, in the course of time and through the process of the refinement of the mind, is dialectically enriched with arguments and forms. Even though they are confuted, erroneous doctrines manifest themselves again in new forms with the appearance of true doctrines: true doctrines are again forced to deal with ancient mistakes, albeit reformulated in new and more captivating shapes, carrying further implications of a political and educational nature. Among the many examples brought forward by history the most evident concerns the resurgence of the sensationalism of the pre-Socratics in Epicureanism and later in the thought of the Renaissance, and finally in the technically and psychologically persuasive formulation provided in the eighteenth century by Condillac. For Rosmini, the eighteenth century was an age "sacred to error", in which "men were led away from steady and salubrious truths and were deceived and beguiled by the apparent advantageousness and the wonderful promises of extremely easy and hitherto unknown knowledge" (pp. 16–18). Rosmini believed that the vicissitudes of the age of the Restoration were a sign of the counter-offensive of true philosophy by those who embraced the true system (pp. 19–28). His criticism of eclecticism is thus placed in a well-thought-out conception of the history of philosophy, the study of which is recommended in order to identify all the possible contributions to truth capable of becoming integrated into the only "system of truth", which is always *in fieri*, but is also the true patrimony of the human mind in its most elevated conquests. For Rosmini, studying the history of philosophy is therefore functional to true philosophy, but it has the specific task of "preserving such abundance of well-ordered doctrine, propagating it among all men, clothing it with all forms, handing it down unblemished to the generations that renew themselves, defending and protecting it against the extremely active, restless, and complex *principle* – which never dies and finds no rest – *of evil* and error" (p. 102).

7.2.4 *Nuovo Saggio sull'origine delle idee* (first part)

Storia comparativa e critica de' sistemi intorno al principio della morale

Del divino nella natura

Saggio storico-critico sulle categorie

7.2.4.1 A certain number of Rosmini's works containing extensive and intentional historical *excursuses* can be considered general histories of philosophy: indeed, from his early interest in the history of the theories on the origin and nature of ideas, Rosmini moved to the history of ethics and then the history of the theories of the soul, finally coming to the history of ontology and that of categories in particular. As has been said, this series of works starts with the *Nuovo Saggio sull'origine delle idee* (1829–1830). Rosmini himself directed their publication, especially that of vols I and II, which concern the history of philosophy. In the title page of vol. I, he makes it clear that the volume contains ‘Preface, principles of methodology, the state of the subject, observations on the systems of Locke, Condillac, Reid, and Stewart’. The title page of vol. II announces ‘Observations on the systems of Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, and Kant’.

The *Storia comparativa e critica de' sistemi intorno al principio della morale* (1837) presents the history of ethical thought, not viewed as “bare history” but as a “comparative history” aimed at explaining all the other major moral systems in addition to the system Rosmini had already briefly put forward in his *Principj della scienza morale* (*Storia comparativa*, p. 10). In the *Nuovo Saggio*, the systems which had laid the foundations of the origin of ideas are compared to the systems which, on the contrary, had overemphasised the rational explanation. Now Rosmini distinguishes between “subjective” and “objective” moral systems, excluding those philosophies which either denied the existence of morality or rendered it impossible in practice. Subjective systems are in turn divided into systems which confuse the moral order with other orders and systems which regard it as clearly distinct. Finally, objective systems are subdivided into systems issuing from objective reason alone and systems deriving from authority or from the will of a legislator. In all, Rosmini sets out 51 systems of morality, among which he includes his own. His aim is to point out the differences between a true moral system and erroneous philosophical reflection, “which wished to grasp the nature of morality but, like a marksman who misses the mark, frequently focused on what was not morality, but having adopted it, declared that it was morality” (*Storia comparativa*, EC, 23, p. 169). This text, which is not among Rosmini's most read and debated works, was not reworked by its author. It came out as a joint edition with the *Principj*, which also appeared in 1837, and the Neapolitan edition of 1844, the last edition promoted Rosmini himself.

After 1837, Rosmini considered it necessary to carry out a historical enquiry into the other fields of the “system of truth”. Hence the historical *excursuses* included in works whose concern was essentially theoretical: we mention here in particular the historical essay ‘Delle sentenze de' filosofi intorno alla natura dell'anima’, contained in the work *Psicologia* (Novara, 1846–1848, I, pp. 381–529; now in EC, 10, pp. 13–136). Towards the end of his life, Rosmini prepared his most laborious historical works, the first of which was *Del divino nella natura*. This work, dedicated

to Alessandro Manzoni, was included as volume IV of the first edition of the *Teosofia*, edited by F. Paoli and P. Perez (Intra, 1869). In the preface of the work *Aristotele esposto ed esaminato* (1857) Rosmini clearly defines the role of Aristotelian thought in the history of philosophy and in Christian thought in particular. The historical analysis rests on Rosmini's intention to restrict the importance of Aristotelian thought in the history of philosophy with respect to the doctrines of truth. Finally, it is worth noting the *Saggio storico-critico sulle categorie*, published together with *Dialettica* (Turin, 1883).

7.2.4.2 For Rosmini, the historical development of thought follows a well-defined course, which he refers to on various occasions, even though he never made it the object of a specific treatment. He begins by establishing a clear distinction between the ancient period and the thought inspired by the Christian religion, since the ancients comprehended the ideality of being partially and inadequately as the form and the object of knowledge and morality. In the notes written in his youth, Rosmini subdivided ancient philosophy into three systems according to its attitude towards the "immutable": the Italic system placed the immutable in ideal being; Heraclitus' system in real being; and Epicureanism and scepticism denied the immutable and thus corrupted philosophy. Rosmini considers the system of stoicism as a mix of the former two systems and sees only Christianity as a comprehensive system of philosophy (this historical outline is quoted in *Vita di Antonio Rosmini*, edition of 1959, p. 341). The many false steps made in Antiquity, therefore, gave rise to aberrations in the fields of morality and religion. Despite this severe judgment, Rosmini believes that the ancients were able to profit from the glimmer of truth they had acquired from the remote knowledge of their progenitors. Taking up the typical conceptions of the historiography of the Renaissance and the Cambridge Neoplatonists, as well as Vico's ideas on the most ancient wisdom of the Italians, Rosmini explained that Greek thought tried to develop doctrines which remained almost in a potential stage in the consciousness and understanding of the various peoples. In particular, it elaborated an important idea concerning the presence of the "divine" (as a reality derived from God but not coinciding with him) in the world. Attempting to identify a principle which he considers to be fundamental, that is, the clear distinction between the "divine" (an attribute of the Idea of being which is present to the human mind) and God, Rosmini finds the origins of a series of conceptions in the remotest period, which enable him to attempt to elaborate an embryonic philosophy of religion and recreate its history. Ancient thought gradually managed to form significant metaphysical, psychological, and ethical doctrines. In the field of metaphysics, with reference to the trace of the "divine" present in nature and thought, worthy of note were the Pythagoreans, Parmenides, and finally Plato, who initiated the most elevated doctrine concerning the perfection of ideas considered as "divine". But their positions, which aimed at rationally explaining the divine essence that governs natural realities, had been prepared by the first naturalist philosophers, who were in turn the heirs of poetic and mythical doctrines. For Rosmini, the roots of theological speculation itself are to be sought in the many fantastical productions of Greece and the East (*Del divino nella natura*, pp. 76–81).

In its historical course philosophy originated, therefore, from myths and symbols, which presuppose the divine action revealing the oneness of the deity ruling the world. Unlike Schelling, Rosmini does not create an antithesis between revelation (and myth) and philosophy.⁵ It is from (natural and supernatural) revelation that human speculation arises: however, only the revelation of Christ is capable of allowing philosophy to achieve the decisive conquest of Wisdom. The confusion between the “divine” and God results in various misinterpretations which are typical of ancient thought: owing to this persistent misunderstanding, which places nature and thought in an erroneous relationship with their source, the notions of Idea, Category, and Soul have frequently been conceived of in a distorted way. The Christian religion alone made it possible to correctly understand that God is the creator and that Idea and Category issue from him, as his own reality. Patristic thought, with which the new era begins, produced admirable commentaries on the great truths which are related to the fact that the divine is the Idea of being in its pureness, light for the mind, and criterion of truth. Scholasticism studied these truths thanks especially to Anselm, Bonaventure, and the Thomistic doctrine of being. However, a complete theorisation of the natural and uncreated light of the mind was hampered by the Scholastics’ excessive exegesis of Aristotle’s works, which was frequently distant from the true doctrines of Christian ontology.

Modern thought constitutes a further and – on a metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical level – disguised development of the erroneous doctrines present both in Antiquity and in Scholastic thought itself, fuelled by the confusion between the divine and God. In his analysis of modern thought, Rosmini tackles both those writers who dealt with “ideas” (and who, more or less, recognised the role of the Idea of being as the sole reference to truth) and those writers who dealt with the “principle” of morality and its objectivity. We do not find in Rosmini a periodisation of the modern age. He takes up the traditional distinction between rationalists and empiricists: whereas in Descartes and Leibniz (and formerly in Plato) innate ideas are overrated principles (they did not recognise the nature of “category” or “form” proper to the idea), a step backwards was taken with Locke and Condillac because they reduced ideas to the pure production of sensibility. Kant’s attempt to reconcile these two opposite ways of understanding ideas could not succeed because it placed the criterion for attaining true knowledge in the categories of the mind, without making sure of their objectivity. It follows that, in Rosmini’s view, modern thought is destined to subjectivism and solipsism, manifest in the doctrines of German idealism. Nevertheless, Kant is of central importance in the *Nuovo Saggio*. Compared with Galluppi’s *Lettere*, the presentation of Kant’s thought here is less faithful and rather tame, since Rosmini makes the Kantian concept of “form” into a crucial element for overcoming modern thought. The idea-form of Being constitutes the object of intuition which allows us to think the data of sense and understand them as imbued with ideality. Kant is accepted for the central place he gives to judgement,

⁵Cf. P. De Vitiis, ‘La comprensione filosofica della mitologia in Rosmini e Schelling’, in *Filosofi cattolici a confronto con il pensiero moderno. Rosmini Newman Blondel*, ed. by S. Biolo (Turin, 1996), pp. 131–144.

but at the same time is rejected owing to the subjective character of pure forms and categories.

In the field of the history of ethics, Rosmini observes that the path followed by reflection on moral principles was analogous to the course of the theory of knowledge. Striving to create a broad classification of the moral systems (subdivided, as we have said, into the “subjective” and the “objective”), he points out that what becomes predominant in modern thought is a tendency towards ethical subjectivism. Indeed, Rosmini’s classification of the systems of morality considers modern doctrinal mistakes as a repetition, albeit on a different plane, of the mistakes made by the ancient philosophers. Socrates’ ethical intellectualism, in which the principle of morality lies in intellection, and the very eudaemonistic view held by Plato and Aristotle (which also confuses the moral order with the order of rationality) were followed in modern thought by a series of doctrines which, while recognising the particularity of the moral order, relate action to imperatives or to elements of consciousness and reason that are an emanation of the subject.

7.2.4.3 In what has been said above we have presented some of the underlying historiographical theories relating to periodisation; we will limit ourselves here to examining ancient and medieval thought. Rosmini began from a fundamental historical belief: in both Oriental and Greek myths and in the later philosophical reflection, from Thales onwards, it is possible to discern a doctrinal development that leads to the contemplation of the primacy of an ideal essence that resides in reality and governs it. Starting from this ideal essence, the thinkers active among the various peoples – with a movement similar in its substance but not equally effective in its results – started to enquire into the existence of perfect beings, gods, or a Being who, eternal and immense, governs and produces the world. However, in searching for the first cause, the ancients, having to refer by rational means to something that remained in their remote experience, and more precisely to ideas and the “divine” as ideal, did not arrive at the concept of the “subsistence of sole being free from any additional element”: hence, either God was identified with the light of reason, which gave rise to the “system of rationalism”, or the “divine” was turned into deity, which plunged men into “superstitions” (*Del divino nella natura*, pp. 33–34). The history of ancient thought therefore became an incessant oscillation between superstition and rationalism, in search of the authentic notion of God: the immanence of God was repeatedly affirmed and posited by means of reason, and his transcendence was merely touched on, but human thought even came to disavow the divine itself, since its primacy in knowledge and morality was not comprehended; hence many thinkers, tired of seeking the divine within and beyond nature or in the highest faculties of man, ended up by denying it. Thus, even in ancient thought, signs appeared heralding subjectivism and sensationalism (p. 29).

Rosmini did not deal with pre-Platonic thought in a continuous way. In particular, he examined Parmenides and Pythagoreanism, the Italic school, but for cosmological and psychological themes he frequently referred to the Ionic thinkers too. Rosmini judges these remote philosophers to be still immature and difficult to understand owing to the fragmentary character of the writings that have been

preserved. He acknowledges that they were able to nurture the traces of primitive revelation which, nevertheless, frequently appears to be misrepresented, as in the case of their mistakes concerning the nature of the soul. Here, Rosmini affirms that the realities of the universe and man are mutually connected in an ascending order: matter, sensitive soul, intellective soul, and the idea of being (*‘Delle sentenze de’ filosofi intorno alla natura dell’anima’*, in *Psicologia*, EC, 10, pp. 14–15). In this division, he has the *Theologia platonica* in mind, in which Ficino enunciates body, quality, soul, angel, and God, in this order. For Ficino and Rosmini, the soul is *essentia tertia*, namely, it constitutes the middle link in the chain of being, partaking both of the higher and the lower world. For Rosmini too, the soul depends on the two orders of reality, the higher and the lower, and is therefore in a state of equilibrium. But in the course of history, some philosophers have distorted this great and almost evident truth concerning the “middle position” of the soul. In ancient thought, when thinkers directed their attention to the nature of the soul, they were often led to consider it as assimilable to the reality which was judged to be more accessible and authentic. The thought of the Ionians, owing to its distance from the authentic sources of Hebrew thought and to the strong attraction exerted by the concrete sight of sensible matter, absolutised the corporeal world. Hence Thales, the naturalists, Heraclitus, and Democritus posited the soul as material, defining it as an aggregate of light atoms (pp. 16–22). Rosmini wonders whether this mistake concerning the nature of the soul really went so far as to declare the principle of life, action, and thought to be totally material. His answer is negative: complete materialism should only be attributed to some Greek philosophers, and it is more correct to regard many of them as adhering to notable oscillations. The soul is sometimes considered as a harmony and unity of material elements, and therefore belonging to an order other than the material one, as in the case of the Pythagoreans, and this represents a “scent” of spirituality (pp. 22–24).

The second mistake made by the ancient philosophers was to consider the soul in itself as sentient, namely, to reduce it to mere sensitivity. However, a step forward was made in the direction of intellective spirituality as even Epicurus and the Stoics considered the soul to be a “principle” arising from sensitivity (pp. 24–25). According to the criterion frequently found in Rosmini that evaluated the doctrines to have emerged in the course of history as inadequate (sometimes by defect and sometimes by excess) compared with the complete system of truth, the excess of identifying the nature of the soul in ideas is considered to be specific to Greek thought in its maturity, as embodied by Plato. Yet, the Pythagoreans, and especially Empedocles, had already made the important step of considering the idea of natural element (or number) as an essential constituent of the nature of the soul (p. 26). With Plato, the doctrine of the soul and the theological and ontological doctrines came together in a decisive systematisation. Rosmini speaks of Plato in much of his historical analysis, tracing the outlines of a dialectical examination of Platonic and Aristotelian thought. He believed Plato was the ancient philosopher who attained the truth on God, knowledge, and man. Aristotle, despite his extensive philosophical encyclopaedia, underwent several phases of regression – with respect to Plato’s achievements – and indicated ambiguous solutions which were dangerous for the

Christian faith. Hence, while it is certain that the study of his thought favoured a logical and conceptual maturity in Scholastic philosophy, it is equally certain that many doctrines of the medieval thinkers were heavily conditioned by the misinterpretations derived from Peripateticism.

Aristotelian realism established itself in the Middle Ages and prevailed over Platonic exemplarism. The negation of ideality ended up by encouraging the search for the deity as a reality, to the point of reducing reality to sensible things alone. Moreover, there emerged an impulse to doubt the power of concepts to represent the universal (*Aristotele esposto ed esaminato*, 1995 edition, n. 34, pp. 48–49). In spite of this, observes Rosmini, the great thinkers of Scholasticism were able to overcome the conditioning influence of Aristotelianism, building (as in the case of Aquinas) ontological, epistemological, and psychological doctrines which turned Aristotelian solutions into real speculative achievements. Rosmini thus strengthens Aquinas' position, making him a reformer and a "corrector" of Aristotle. For Rosmini, Scholasticism was not subjugated by Aristotle's authority; it was easily penetrated by rationalism and naturalism thanks to the excessive support given to Peripatetic doctrines by many Christian doctors. This made Scholastic theology incline towards excessively analytical examination and dialectical subtleties, which became predominant towards the end of the Middle Ages and which Rosmini criticises in *Delle cinque piaghe* in particular. Rosmini observes, however, that, with the establishment of seminaries after the Council of Trent, the subtleties of the last declining phase of Scholasticism did diminish, even though the profound exegesis of the Fathers did not reappear. This resulted in a practice of philosophy and theology which often lost sight of any reference to wisdom and produced only dry texts devoid of reflection suitable for the faithful (*Delle cinque piaghe*, edition of 1998, pp. 46–57; *Introduzione alla filosofia*, pp. 41–43).

7.2.4.4 From a methodological point of view, it must be noted that even in his work as a historian, Rosmini adopted a speculative method and expressed judgments of a theoretical nature. His works that are explicitly described as "philosophical history" (those on the history of the principle of morality, the history of "ideology", and the history of categories) all have a systematic structure as the doctrines are grouped and classified according to a theoretical problem-based criterion. The only works in which he applied the method used in the historiography of philosophy of his time were his *Del divino nella natura* and his history of the conceptions of the soul. Here, the concept of system plays a central role. In a note to *Degli studi dell'autore*, Rosmini explains: "When we speak of *true systems* in the plural we do not mean that more than one true complete system can exist; in fact, several true incomplete systems can exist, depending on to whether philosophers posit the highest principle. However, all true incomplete systems are nothing other than limbs of the only true complete system, that is, the ideal towards which a philosopher's intention and meditation is oriented" (*Introduzione alla filosofia*, ed. by Ottonello, p. 97).

The plurality of systems is often apparent rather than real, and so the study of the history of philosophy needs a method for discerning where systems adhere to the only ideal system, or, on the contrary, where they fight against it in order to destroy

it or are unable to recognize it. But, as we have seen, this method cannot be the eclectic method of "tolerance", which is inadequate for the dialectic of ideas, which should be exclusively governed by the principles of non-contradiction and coherence. The "reconciliation of judgments" Rosmini speaks of must follow the law of the intellect, whereas the "tolerance" of the eclectics can only be applied to the law of the will and concerns philosophers as people, not their ideas (pp. 99–100). It is possible to reconcile systems by identifying the level their statements should be placed on, as if the system of truth were like a big tree whose branches were partial systems. If erroneous doctrines can be presented as true, it is even more likely for true doctrines to be formulated in different ways which develop their potentialities. This activity requires an interpretative method that considers the statements contained in the different systems as mutually compatible on an ideal plane rather than being in conflict with one another. This means that philosophers of every age have to understand the positions of their predecessors and remind themselves that, "as for those things that are the most important and the most necessary to man, all great philosophers differ from one another more in appearance than in substance, and although they clothe truth in various forms, which are not always expedient and appropriate, they still end up by finding truth itself, sometimes without being aware that they are in agreement" (p. 104).

But Rosmini's specific methodological approach is the one set out in his *Storia comparativa e critica de' sistemi intorno al principio della morale*. His aim here was to examine the differences and similarities in the systems, allowing the reader to classify the possible and real positions taken on the principle of morality: "In other words, my task is to compare all the major moral systems with the moral system I have explained and to show in what ways they differ. This will enable the reader to formulate an unbiased judgment of the various systems devised by human intelligence with regard to morality: what will then become most evident, in my opinion, are the mistakes made by man by means of a philosophical reflection which attempted to grasp the nature of morality but [...] frequently focused on what was not morality, although, by adopting it, declared it to be morality" (*Principj della scienza morale*, ed. by Muratore, p. 169). Rosmini therefore subdivides philosophical systems according to their proximity to the true moral system, and not according to the names of the most outstanding thinkers. He deals with systems that deny morality even though they speak of it, with systems which render it impossible, and with still more systems which confuse the "moral" order with the order of "nature", "animality", or "rationality", thus coming closer to the perfect system (pp. 33–45). After classifying these moral systems, Rosmini believes it is possible to grasp in each of them those elements of truth which, either because of a fault in the system itself or in its historical context, were not able to reach the fundamental doctrine that moral action can only be achieved by following the objective light of reason and observing the order proper to being. The various systems, albeit only in part, have been able to come close to the truth of the absolute moral principle in seven

fundamental points.⁶ These seven basic elements of objective ethics were perceived by several ancient and modern thinkers who contributed towards the description of the truth of ethics. This truth is not contained in a single true system, but in an “open” system, which receives the various doctrines, reconciles them, and thus reinforces the edifice of morality.

7.2.5 It would be an arduous (and fundamentally unproductive) task to identify and separate out the more specifically historiographical judgements from the interpretations of Rosmini’s thought as a whole and the controversies which he gave rise to within the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, the markedly speculative approach of Rosmini’s works on the history of philosophy prevented them from being judged independently of his more strictly theoretical works, even though his interpretation of Antiquity revealed itself to be of considerable interest: Ruggero Bonghi, for example, who was a shrewd historian of ancient thought, was influenced by Rosmini’s works especially in his translations of Aristotle (*Metafisica*, translated into Italian and commented on by R. Bonghi, Turin, 1854). Nor should we forget the interest in Rosmini’s approach to national problem – as well as his theoretical views – shown by the theologian and historian of philosophy Karl Werner in the first volume of his *Die italienische Philosophie des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, which was entitled *Antonio Rosmini und seine Schule* (Vienna, 1884). Werner, who had a deep knowledge of Italian philosophy and had studied Vico and the thought of the eighteenth as well as the nineteenth century, believed that Rosmini’s reflections provided a great contribution to Christian philosophy from an idealistic orthodox point of view, and he appreciated Rosmini’s interpretation of modern thought (see *A. Rosmini’s Stellung in der Geschichte der neueren Philosophie, der italienischen insbesondere*, Vienna, 1884). In Italy, Rosmini was highly praised by the Hegelians, who included him in the ambit of an alleged “Italian Kantianism”, but no one made the specific effort to examine and evaluate his view of the history of philosophy.

The Rosminian Renaissance which took place in the twentieth century was accompanied by a certain interest in that part of his work which dealt with the history of philosophy. But the scholars who studied his thought followed by then more modern historiographical criteria. An enthusiastic Rosmini scholar like Michele Federico Sciacca, even though he worked industriously to elaborate a history of philosophy inspired by a critical as well as Catholic approach, did not contribute to a complete acceptance of Rosmini’s interpretative paradigm. A historiographical perspective which could be considered to be closer to Rosmini’s approach in a broad

⁶The seven points are: i) considering that there is only one essence of virtue; ii) considering the moral essence to be realizable, presupposing the terms “subject” and “object”; iii) considering that cognition subject to human will consists of a practical judgment of assessment; iv) considering being as the principle that measures the “price” of things for action; v) considering that effects, or works, depend upon the practical assessment that we make of things; vi) considering that moral activity arises from intelligent subjects and ends in intelligent beings; vii) and, finally, considering that moral action rests on a solid basis because it tends to and presupposes the absolute (*Storia comparativa e critica*, in *Principj della scienza morale*, ed. by Muratore, pp. 398–399).

sense was that of Pietro Prini, who wrote two monographs on him: *Introduzione alla metafisica di Antonio Rosmini* (Domodossola and Milan, 1953) and *Rosmini postumo* (Stresa and Rome, 1993 [first ed. 1960]). The publication of Prini's short but substantial essay on the nature of knowledge of the history of philosophy – entitled *Introduzione critica alla storia della filosofia* (Rome, 1967, 3rd ed. 1973) – made a considerable impact on Italian Catholic culture, where what prevailed was neo-Thomism, even in the way of conceiving the history of philosophy. Some of Rosmini's views were also brilliantly used in another of Prini's works, *La filosofia cattolica italiana del Novecento* (Rome and Bari, 1996).

7.2.6 On Rosmini's biography and works: [G.B. Pagani], *Vita di Antonio Rosmini scritta da un sacerdote dell'Istituto della Carità*, revised and updated by professor G. Rossi (Rovereto, 1959), 2 vols (1st ed. Turin, 1897, 2 vols); G. Radice, *Annali di Antonio Rosmini-Serbatì* (Milan, 1967–1994), 8 vols (stopped at the year 1838); C. Bergamaschi, *Bibliografia degli scritti editi di Antonio Rosmini Serbatì* (Milan and Stresa, 1970–2011), 6 vols. – On writings concerning Rosmini and his Institute: C. Bergamaschi, *Bibliografia rosmينiana* (Milan, Genoa, and Stresa, 1967–2011), 11 vols (now being updated by the “Centro internazionale di studi rosmينiani di Stresa”).

On Rosmini's intellectual training: *La formazione di A. Rosmini nella cultura del suo tempo*, ed. by A. Valle (Brescia, 1988) (see in particular the essays of I. Mancini, ‘La Critica della ragion pura nella formazione di A. Rosmini’, pp. 131–204, and U. Pellegrino, ‘A. Rosmini e la formazione padovana’, pp. 261–274); L. Malusa, ‘Teologia e filosofia negli studi padovani di A. Rosmini’, *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova*, XXXII (1999), pp. 103–132; L. Malusa and S. Zanardi, *Le lettere di Antonio Rosmini-Serbatì: un “cantiere” per lo studioso. Introduzione all'epistolario rosmينiano* (Venice, 2013); L. Malusa, ‘Il giovane Antonio Rosmini, ossia il desiderio di una comunicazione “intelligente ed amica”. Introduzione alle lettere del periodo della formazione’, in EC, 61, pp. 25–127.

On Rosmini's thought we can only mention the most significant recent studies: M.A. Raschini, *Rosmini e l'idea di progresso* (Stresa, 1986; 2nd ed. Venice, 2000); G. Lorizio, *Eschaton e storia nel pensiero di A. Rosmini. Genesi e analisi della Teodicea in prospettiva teologica* (Rome and Brescia, 1988); G. Lorizio, *Antonio Rosmini-Serbatì, 1797–1855. Un profilo storico-teologico* (Milan, 1997); P. Prini, *Introduzione a Rosmini* (Rome and Bari, 1997); M. Dossi, *Profilo filosofico di A. Rosmini* (Brescia, 1998); P. De Lucia, *Essere e soggetto. Rosmini e la fondazione dell'antropologia ontologica* (Pavia, 1999); F. De Giorgi, *Rosmini e il suo tempo. L'educazione dell'uomo moderno tra riforma della filosofia e rinnovamento della Chiesa (1797–1832)* (Brescia, 2003); M. Krienke, *Wahrheit und Liebe bei A. Rosmini* (Stuttgart, 2004); Id., *A. Rosmini. Ein Philosoph zwischen Tradition und Moderne* (Freiburg and Munich, 2008); L. Malusa, *Antonio Rosmini per l'unità d'Italia. Tra aspirazione nazionale e fede cristiana* (Milan, 2011).

On the history of philosophy in Rosmini: F. Piemontese, ‘Rosmini come storico della filosofia’, RR, LXIII (1969), pp. 167–179; E. Pignoloni, ‘Filosofia e storia della filosofia in Rosmini’, *ibid.*, pp. 180–185; L. Malusa, ‘La dinamica dell'errore

e della verità nella visione di Rosmini. Alcune considerazioni in margine a *Rosmini e l'idea di progresso*, in *Responsabilità della cultura. Studi in onore di Maria Adelaide Raschini* (L'Aquila, 1990), pp. 181–189; Id., 'Il nesso teoresi-storiografia nella formazione del pensiero rosminiano', in *Il pensiero di Antonio Rosmini a due secoli dalla nascita*, ed. by G. Beschin, A. Valle, and S. Zucal (Brescia, 1999), I, pp. 123–140; Id., 'La storiografia filosofica nell'enciclopedia rosminiana del sapere', in *Rosmini e l'enciclopedia delle scienze*, ed. by P.P. Ottonello (Florence, 1998), pp. 27–57. – On Rosmini's interpretation of individual authors and specific periods: G. Messina, *I presocratici nel pensiero di Rosmini* (Stresa, 1999); E. Berti, *La metafisica di Platone e di Aristotele nell'interpretazione di A. Rosmini* (Rome, 1978); G. Imbraguglia, 'Le fonti classiche del pensiero di Rosmini', in *Rosmini pensatore europeo*, ed. by M.A. Raschini (Milan, 1989), pp. 295–316; B. Salmona, 'La Sacra Scrittura come fonte di Rosmini', RR, XCI (1997), pp. 301–371; A. Quacquarelli, *La lezione patristica di A. Rosmini (i presupposti del suo pensiero)* (Rome, 1980); Id., 'L'esegesi delle fonti patristiche ed altomedievali secondo Rosmini', in *Rosmini pensatore europeo*, pp. 317–332; Id., *Le radici patristiche della teologia di A. Rosmini* (Bari, 1991); M. Bettetini and A. Peratoner, 'Linee per uno studio sull'uso delle fonti patristiche nelle opere di Rosmini', RR, XCI (1997), pp. 483–519; M. Facco, 'Prospettive rosminiane sul pensiero di Occam', in *Rosmini pensatore europeo*, pp. 365–374; A. Tripodi, 'Rosmini e Descartes', *ibid.*, pp. 375–386; T. Bugossi, 'Teodicea: Rosmini e Leibniz', *ibid.*, pp. 387–396; L. Malusa, 'A. Rosmini e il pensiero moderno', in *Filosofi cattolici a confronto con il pensiero moderno. Rosmini Newman Blondel*, ed. by S. Biolo (Turin, 1996), pp. 93–113; P. Gomasasca, 'Le fonti illuministiche francesi nel pensiero di Rosmini. Dai *Philosophes* agli *Idéologues*', RR, XCI (1997), pp. 521–569; P.P. Ottonello, 'Rosmini e Vico: la "filosofia italiana"', RR, LXXXIII (1989), pp. 265–274; Id., 'Rosmini e la prima ricezione di Fichte e Schelling in Italia', RR, LXXXVIII (1994), pp. 201–203; C. Santinelli, 'Rosmini e Gioberti lettori di Spinoza. Considerazioni a margine di una polemica', *Studi urbinati B: Scienze umane e sociali*, LXIX (1999), pp. 77–111; S.F. Tadini, *Il Platone di Rosmini. L'essenzialità del platonismo rosminiano* (Soveria Mannelli, 2010); C.M. Fenu, *Rosmini e l'idealismo tedesco* (Stresa, 2016).

Chapter 8

The British Historiography of Philosophy in the Nineteenth-Century



Giuseppe Micheli

8.1 Foreword

During the eighteenth century, British works on the history of philosophy were very limited and absolutely incomparable not only to the great German historiographical production, but even to the much more modest works produced in France or in Italy during the same period. In the field of the historiography of philosophy, no important original work in English appeared before the *Dissertation: Exhibiting the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical and Political Philosophy since the Revival of Letters in Europe* by the Scotsman Dugald Stewart, which was published in two parts, in 1815 and in 1821 respectively, in the form of an essay preliminary to the supplement to the fourth, fifth, and sixth editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.¹

¹James Mackintosh, who in September 1816 reviewed the first part of Stewart's dissertation, acknowledged with great honesty the poverty and the delay shown by British philosophical culture in this field: "In later times, the Germans have cultivated this department more successfully than any other nation. Tiedemann's *Spirit of Speculative Philosophy* is a book of great value to inquirers into this subject. Fülleborn's *Contributions to the History of Philosophy*, Buhle's *History of modern Philosophy*, are useful publications. Tennemann's *History of Philosophy* (not yet completed) is the best work on the subject which the Continent has produced [...]. In other Continental countries, we know of no attempts worthy of particular notice, since the excellent fragments of Gassendi [i.e. *De philosophia universe* and *De origine et varietate logicae liber unus* in Gassendi, *Opera Omnia* (Lyon, 1658) vol. I, pp. 1–30 and 35–66; cf. *Models*, I, p. 138]. The first general history (only indeed of ancient) philosophy, on a large scale, in modern times, was that of Stanley, formed on the model of Gassendi [...]. It is a work of uncommon merit for the time in which it was written, and continued during more than a century to be the standard book on this subject for all Europe, until it was succeeded by Brucker. Since Stanley, we [in Britain] have had no general work of this kind, but some abridgments of more or less perspicuity and convenience" (*Edinburgh Review*, XXVII, no. 53, Sept. 1816, pp. 190–191).

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In Great Britain, during the first half of the eighteenth century, almost nothing appeared. Besides Thomas Stanley's *History of Philosophy*, which was repeatedly reprinted, no other publication came out.² During the second half of the eighteenth century we find the English translation – published in London in 1766 and reprinted in Glasgow in 1767 – of the successful *Histoire abrégée de la philosophie*, in which Jean-Henri-Samuel Formey (a writer from Berlin but of French extraction) summarised in a little more than 300 small pages the five tomes of Brucker's work.³ Three decades later, William Enfield, a radically-oriented English Presbyterian, published a lengthy summary of Brucker's *Historia critica*⁴; this text enjoyed considerable popularity and was reprinted several times even during the first half of the nineteenth century, but it did not present anything original when compared with its source. Both works were intended for cultivated readers and were not meant to be school textbooks, as had instead been the case in Germany for at least a century. Indeed, in England, the history of philosophy was still granted no space in university teaching. The situation was perhaps different in the numerous Academies for dissenters, which had more contact with the universities of the Continent, especially the Dutch ones, where students who were debarred from attending Oxford and Cambridge could sometimes continue their studies and take academic degrees.⁵ However, during the second half of the century, Brucker's *Historia critica* was present beside Stanley's *History* in British libraries, where it was used and consulted.⁶

² Stanley's *History* was first published in 1655–1662, subsequent editions appeared in 1687 and in 1701; the fourth edition appeared in 1743; a Latin translation, first published at Leipzig in 1711 and edited by the German theologian and erudite scholar Gottfried Olearius, brought Stanley's work fame and diffusion throughout Europe; on the editions of Stanley's work, see *Models*, I, pp. 176–179.

³ J.-H.-S. Formey, *A Concise History of Philosophy and Philosophers* (London: F. Newbery, 1766; another edition: Glasgow: R. Urie, 1767); Formey's compendium had first appeared in French in Amsterdam in 1760 (German translation: Berlin, 1763). On Formey's manual, cf. *Models*, III, pp. 477–482.

⁴ W. Enfield, *The History of Philosophy from the Earliest Times to the Beginnings of the Present Century, drawn up from Brucker's Historia Critica Philosophiae* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1791; successive editions: 1792, 1819, 1837, 1840). On Enfield's historiographical work, cf. *Models*, III, pp. 438–443.

⁵ On the organisation of the Humanities in English universities and in the Academies for dissenters in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, cf. I. Parker, *Dissenting Academies in England: their Rise and Progress and their Place among the Educational System of the Country* (Cambridge, 1914); G. Haines, *German Influence upon English Education and Science, 1800–1866* (New London, 1957), in particular pp. 1–16; A.P.F. Sell, *Philosophy, Dissent, and Nonconformity, 1689–1920* (Cambridge, 2004). Until 1854 an intending Oxford undergraduate could not matriculate without first subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles; a Cambridge graduand had to profess himself a member of the Church of England, failing this he could not take a degree.

⁶ For example, it appears that in August 1797 R. Southey and S.T. Coleridge borrowed Brucker's volumes from the Bristol Library, and previously, in October 1793 and again in March 1795, they had borrowed Enfield's volumes. Cf. G. Whalley, 'The Bristol Library Borrowings of Southey and Coleridge, 1793–98', *The Library. Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, September 1949, pp. 114–132; see also *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford, 1956), I, pp. 321, 323, 324, and 554.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, a more lively interest in the history of philosophy seems to have arisen in Scotland. William Robertson, Edward Gibbon, and David Hume brought about a conspicuous revolution in the field of historical studies: a transition took place from the historiography of the ‘antiquarians’ to a historiography defined as ‘philosophical’. Adam Smith dealt with the history of philosophy in several essays published posthumously; Thomas Reid wrote some texts on Aristotle’s logic; and James Burnett (Lord Monboddo) published an extensive work entitled *Antient Metaphysics* and another text on the origin of language which also contain sections devoted to the history of thought.⁷ But these works are not strictly speaking histories of philosophy. The only contribution in this domain was the history of Greek philosophy published in 1791 by Walter Anderson with the purpose of updating Stanley’s work.⁸ However, not even the academic curricula offered by the Scottish universities, although their organisation was modelled to some degree on the continental universities, showed any trace of offering courses on the history of philosophy.

8.2 British Culture and German Philosophy in the Age of the Revolution

The fact that British culture did not show much interest in the historiography of philosophy resulted very probably from, among other things, the poor relations existing at the time between England and German philosophical culture in particular. During the eighteenth century, German philosophy exercised a limited influence on British culture. The university of Göttingen, founded in 1734 by George II, King of Great Britain, played an important role in the cultural exchange between the two countries, also because the territory of Hannover was at the time the personal property of the British crown. In the beginning, however, the contribution of the university of Göttingen was to spread information in Great Britain almost only on the developments in the fields of the natural sciences and biblical studies⁹; indeed, as for the study of philosophy, Göttingen performed an important function in the opposite

⁷On “philosophical history” and the Scottish Enlightenment, cf. *Models*, III, pp. 383–472.

⁸W. Anderson, *The Philosophy of Ancient Greece*, Edinburgh: Smellie, 1791; cf. *Models*, III, pp. 397–400.

⁹On 5th May 1796, referring to his future journey to Germany, Coleridge wrote to Thomas Poole: “[...] I should there study Chemistry and Anatomy, and bring over with me all the works of Semler and Michaelis, the German Theologians, and of Kant, the great German Metaphysician [...]” (Coleridge, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 209). Three years later, on 21st May 1799, on the eve of his return home, evaluating the results of his stay in Göttingen, he wrote to Josiah Wedgwood: “What have I done in Germany? I have learnt the language [...]. I have attended the lectures on Physiology, Anatomy, and Natural History with regularity, and have endeavoured to understand these subjects. I have read and made collections for a history of the Belles Lettres in Germany before the time of Lessing and [...] very large collections for a Life of Lessing [...]. My main business at Göttingen has been to read all the numerous Controversies in which L[essing] was engaged and the works of all those German Poets before the time of Lessing, which I *could not*, or could not *afford* to buy [...]” (pp. 518–19). See also R. Ashton, *The German Idea. Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought, 1800–1860* (Cambridge, 1980) pp. 1–34; M. van Woudenberg, *Coleridge and Cosmopolitan Intellectualism. The Legacy of Göttingen University* (London and New York, 2018).

direction, contributing to the diffusion of British philosophy, especially Scottish philosophy, in Germany.¹⁰

In Britain, particularly in England, there was a change in the opinion of the cultivated classes in the early 1780s; at first it was thanks to the new German literature that the English public discovered Germany. This phenomenon increased considerably in the 1780s and during the last decade of the century: the entire literary production of the new German school, especially drama, from Goethe to Schiller and Kotzebue, was translated into English and became widely popular.¹¹ This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the new German literature was capable of expressing better than any other the feelings of English readers, and above all the hopes, particularly widespread in the middle class, for radical changes of a political, social, and religious nature.¹² During the last two decades of the eighteenth century, British society, especially in England, was in a state of feverish restlessness. In England in 1789 there were celebrations for the centenary of the Glorious Revolution, and in radical circles this anniversary was seen as an opportunity for encouraging the development of the political system in a more liberal direction. Events in France only contributed to rendering the debate even more heated. In public opinion, the celebration of the centenary evoked memories of the recent American Revolution and was associated with the news from Paris. The conviction that the time was now ripe for a decisive change of direction in the history of humanity was widespread in radical and liberal segments of the public and found expression in the press, in the domain of literature, and in the activities of several cultural and political circles.¹³

In this cultural and political context, in the mid 1780s England was already awash with information on recent German philosophy and the heated debates it

¹⁰ Cf. M. Kuehn, *Scottish Common Sense in Germany: 1768–1800* (Kingston and Montreal, 1987), in particular pp. 70–85.

¹¹ Just two examples: Goethe's *Werther* was translated into English for the first time in 1779; twenty years later, in 1799, at the end of this exceptional season, the editions of *Werther* amounted at least to 24; in no more than two years (1798–1799) there appeared about a hundred editions of Kotzebue's plays in English (cf. B.Q. Morgan, *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation: 1481–1927*, 2nd ed., Stanford, 1938, pp. 156–159 [Goethe] and 280–289 [Kotzebue]).

¹² On German literature in Great Britain, cf. *German Literature in British magazines 1750–1860*, ed. by B.Q. Morgan, A.R. Hohlfeld, and M. Nicolai (Madison, 1949) pp. 37–42.

¹³ In the famous speech he held on 4th November 1789 before the 'Society for the Commemoration of the Glorious Revolution', Richard Price observed that "though the [English] Revolution was a great work, it was by no means a perfect work" (R. Price, *A Discourse on the Love of our Country*, London: T. Cadell, 1789, p. 35). He invited everyone to reflect on "the favourableness of the present times to all exertions of the cause of public liberty", and concluded: "what an eventful period is this! [...] After sharing in the benefits of one Revolution, I have been spared to be a witness to two other Revolutions [the American and the French], both glorious. And now, methinks, I see the ardour for liberty catching and spreading; a general amendment beginning in human affairs; the domination of kings changed for the domination of laws, and the domination of priests giving way to the domination of reason and conscience" (pp. 49–50).

aroused not only in Germany, but also in France and the nearby Netherlands. The information concerning German philosophy reached the cultivated British public mainly through literary magazines, where the news appeared mingled and confused with a great amount of other news from the world of literature and the sciences, but also regarding current political events both at home and abroad. The context in which literary magazines presented the information on German philosophy strongly influenced its reception: the new German philosophy, Kant's philosophy, his ideas in the metaphysical domain, in the domain of ethics, and in politics, were necessarily connected with elements of the British philosophical tradition, such as Locke's empiricism, Berkeley's idealism, Hume's scepticism, and the new philosophy of the Scottish school of 'common sense'.¹⁴ But at first it was mainly the political context that affected the reception of the new German philosophy in England: the turbulent course of events and the rapid evolution of the political situation changed the context within which German philosophical and literary culture was received, thus producing in turn a change in the image of the latter among the English cultivated class. One century after the Glorious Revolution, the period which began with hopes for constitutional reforms came to an end a decade later with Great Britain's withdrawal into itself and with its refusal to accept the cultural influence from the Continent, initially out of fear of a 'Jacobin' infection and then because of the long war against Napoleonic France.

The first news concerning the philosophical debate in Germany reached Great Britain in the late 1780s and then particularly in the 1790s, pervading the British liberal and radical circles, which were particularly perceptive with regard to the new ideas from the Continent in the field of the experimental sciences, letters, and politics. These circles were closely connected with the milieu of religious dissent; as non-Anglicans were not allowed to attend Oxford and Cambridge, they had a long tradition of relations not only with Scottish but also with Dutch universities, and it is to be noted that the Netherlands was one of the main centres disseminating Kantian philosophy outside Germany.¹⁵ This explains why the first news concerning Kant and German philosophy reached Scotland, on one hand, whose universities

¹⁴ In Scotland, the philosophy of 'common sense' had become solidly established; in England, Locke's empiricism was prevailing at the time, although in the version represented by Hartley's associationist sensationalism, which had become widespread thanks to Joseph Priestley's writing *Hartley's Theory of Human Mind, on the Principle of Association of Ideas* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1775, 2nd ed. 1790, 3rd ed. 1794), whereas in the field of ethics William Paley's and Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism was dominant.

¹⁵ The Netherlands had become a centre of considerable importance for the study of Kant's philosophy, with Paulus van Hemert (from 1792 onwards) first and then with Hans Kinker (cf. M.R. Wielema, 'Die erste niederländische Kant-Rezeption: 1786–1850', *Kant-Studien*, LXXIX, 1988, pp. 450–466); on the connections between the English dissenters and Dutch universities, cf. G. Haines, *German Influence upon English Education and Science, 1800–1866*, pp. 5–6.

traditionally maintained close relations with the Continent,¹⁶ and England, on the other, where the circulation mostly occurred through the work of Presbyterians who studied or had studied in the Netherlands and collaborated with English literary magazines of a liberal and radical tendency.¹⁷ Kant's liberalism, his explicit propensity for the French Revolution, his ideas in the field of the philosophy of politics and history, and his philosophy of religion, made him acceptable, in many respects, to

¹⁶ In 1789, Johann Benjamin Jachman, a pupil of Kant and the brother of Reinhold Bernhard, who was to become Kant's biographer, held a series of lectures on the first *Critique* in Edinburgh (cf. Kant, *Briefe*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Akademie Ausgabe, Berlin, 1902-, vol. XI, pp. 21–22). Again in Edinburgh, from 1792 to 1797, Anthony Willich, a German physician who had attended Kant's lessons between 1778 and 1781 and who was shortly to publish in London a volume on Kant's philosophy, taught German to some youth men among whom Walter Scott; in the same period, Franz von Baader, who was then studying in Scotland, wrote a memoir in English to explain Kant's philosophy to his Scottish friends; shortly afterwards, between autumn 1798 and summer 1799, another German, the future historian Barthold Georg Niebuhr, who was studying chemistry, physics, and mathematics in Edinburgh, discussed on Kant's philosophy with some circles of friends (cf. R. Wellek, *Immanuel Kant in England: 1793–1838*, Princeton, 1931, pp. 28–32).

¹⁷ As for England, between 1790 and the French occupation of the Netherlands in January 1795, two Presbyterian ministers of the English congregation of Amsterdam, namely the physician Thomas Cogan and the chemist Benjamin Sowden, sent several articles and reviews concerning Kant's philosophy to the most influential and widespread English literary magazine, namely the *Monthly Review*, which at the time showed clearly liberal leanings (cf. *Monthly Review*, III, 1790, p. 484; X, 1793, pp. 523–531; XIV, 1794, pp. 541–545; XV, 1794, pp. 539–544). However, the first Englishman who read the original German version of Kant's most important works (the three *Critiques*, the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, and *Toward Perpetual Peace*) was Thomas Beddoes. He received his education at Pembroke College Oxford, then studied medicine and chemistry in London and Edinburgh; like many chemists and physicians of the time, he had a good knowledge of German literature, especially in the scientific field. From 1787 onwards he was chemistry Reader in Oxford, but at the end of 1792 he was required to abandon teaching and the town under the accusation of Jacobinism (cf. T.H. Levere, 'Dr. Th. Beddoes at Oxford: Radical Politics and the Fate of the Regius Chair in Chemistry', *Ambix*, XXVIII, 1981, pp. 61–69). On a political plane, he adopted definitely radical positions, while from the point of view of religion he inclined towards the dissenters; in Bristol he founded an intellectual circle, which was decisive for the diffusion of German literature in England; Coleridge and Southey had personal relations with him. On Beddoes, see G. Micheli, 'Beddoes, Thomas', in *DECBPh*, pp. 67–72. On the early reception of Kant in Great Britain, besides the monograph by Wellek, see: G. Micheli, 'The Early Reception of Kant's Thought in England', in *Kant and His Influence*, ed. by G. MacDonald Ross and T. McWalter (Bristol, 1990), pp. 202–314; Id., 'The First English Translations of Kant', in *Ideengeschichte und Wissenschaftsphilosophie*, ed. by R. Dodel, E. Siedel, and L. Steindler (Köln, 1997), pp. 77–104; M. Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas in England: 1796–1817* (London, 2012), pp. 17–91. On the Bristol circle, Thomas Beddoes, and German culture, cf. C.A. Weber, 'Bristols Bedeutung für die Englische Romantik und die deutsch-englischen Beziehungen', in *Studien zur englischen Philologie*, ed. by L. Morsbach and H. Hecht, Heft LXXXIX (Halle, 1935), pp. 92–115.

the English radicals and liberals, who still held a firm cultural hegemony which they exerted through their control over the main literary magazines.¹⁸

At the turn of the century, between 1799 and the early months of 1801, the interest of the cultivated British public in German culture, which reflected the cultural supremacy of the radical and dissenting groups, suddenly ceased. The change in atmosphere and the anti-German reaction were due to political reasons and mirrored the worries of the British ruling class with regard to the possible contamination of liberal ideas from the Continent. This change affected most of British society deeply and the changes were long-lasting: the long war against France brought about greater solidarity in British society and allowed the more conservative segment of the ruling class to demolish the cultural hegemony hitherto exerted over society by the liberal and democratic section of the English cultivated classes. From 1798 onwards, the new periodicals, in particular the *Anti-Jacobin Review*,¹⁹ organised a clever campaign in the press against everything German; the writings of Goethe, Schiller, and Kotzebue, which had been so popular in the previous years, were accused of immorality; the proposals, put forward by liberal and radical exponents to reform the universities of Oxford and Cambridge following the German model

¹⁸ Radical circles, like that of Thomas Beddoes (cf. *Monthly Magazine*, I, 1796, pp. 265–267), were also interested in the Kantian idea of an epochal change in the fields of metaphysics, ethics, religion, and law, which fundamentally corresponded to the image of Kant's philosophy which had been spread in Germany by Reinhold's *Briefe*, namely, the Kant that was taught at Jena, the idea of critical philosophy provided by the magazine which had become the most important means of diffusion of Kantianism on German soil, i.e. the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* of Jena, whose reviews from 1788 onwards had been reproduced, more or less in full, in a radical London periodical, the *Analytical Review*, which was obliged to close down in June 1798, when the publisher, Joseph Johnson, was condemned and imprisoned for having contravened the laws regulating the press (cf. S. Oliver, 'Silencing Joseph Johnson and the *Analytical Review*', *The Wordsworth Circle*, XL, no. 2/3, 2009, pp. 96–102). Reinhold's *Versuch einer neuen Theorie der menschlichen Vermögen* (1789) also inspired Friedrich August Nitsch, a pupil of Kant (cf. Kant, *Briefe*, XI, p. 518; see also G. Baum and R. Malter, 'Kant in England. Ein neuer Brief: Kant an Friedrich August Nitsch', *Kant-Studien*, LXXXII, 1991, pp. 456–468), who came to London and in May 1796 published an exposition of Kant's system (*A General and Introductory View of Professor Kant's Principles*, London: Downes, 1796; cf. G. Micheli, 'Nitsch, Friedrich August', in DECGPh, pp. 858–859; on Nitsch's work and his dependence on Reinhold, cf. Micheli, 'The Early Reception of Kant's Thought in England', pp. 259–273; Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas in England*, in particular pp. 32–36).

¹⁹ The journal, financially supported by Pitt's government, began publication in July 1798 following a brief very successful experiment, between 1797 and 1798, as a weekly journal of political satire (*The Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner*). The journal, which consisted mostly of reviews, but also had articles, engravings and caricatures, made a forceful entrance into British culture of the time. Cf. D. Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh* (London, 1978), pp. 181–182; A. Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines*, vol. II (Westport and London, 1983); E. L. de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobin 1798–1800. The Early Contributors to the Anti-Jacobin Review* (Basingstoke, 1988).

were considered as attempts to introduce the supremacy of philosophy into university teaching, which was seen as a path towards Jacobinism, to the propagation of republican and radical ideas, and to immorality and irreligiosity among the young, just like what was happening in German universities.²⁰

Indeed, the conservative press greatly highlighted the controversy on atheism which, between October 1798 and April of the following year, had seen Fichte in Jena as its protagonist. The accusations aimed at the new German philosophy, although formulated roughly, can be explained by the cultural climate that pervaded Germany, in particular Jena, precisely in that period. The enthusiastic attitude towards the two revolutions, the political revolution and the revolution in philosophical culture, had produced an extremely inflammable mixture, which worried the conservative circles in Germany too. Here we can remember the role played by Herder. After 1787, Herder had avoided any personal intervention concerning Kant's philosophy, but in Weimar, where he supervised the education of the clergy of Saxony, he followed with increasing concern the influence exercised by Fichte's teaching on the young, and in 1799 he decided to intervene. Herder's *Metakritik* originated in this cultural atmosphere, when "the new philosophy, at least at Jena, already predominated in all faculties, and no professor dared to teach without using the terminology of philosophy", and the moral and religious crisis reached its

²⁰ Someone who paid for this sudden change in the cultural atmosphere was Coleridge, and this negative experience forever affected his public attitude towards German culture. In the mid 1790s, Coleridge felt a sincere, albeit confused, enthusiasm for the revolution and the democracy carried out in France; he was greatly interested in German literature, particularly in Schiller but also in Goethe. However, when, in the second half of 1798, he decided to undertake a study tour in Germany, his libertarian enthusiasm had already deadened, and his purpose was just to study "Physiology, Anatomy, and Natural History", to collect materials to write a life of Lessing, and to find books on metaphysics (see above, note 9). But precisely in that period the attitude of the British public towards German literature changed radically: accused of immorality and irreligiosity, it was pilloried in the press for its excesses both from a political and an artistic point of view. Even Coleridge's journey to Germany gave cause for a bitter attack aiming at denigrating the radical intellectuals in the sight of the public, among whom Coleridge; together with his friend and fellow traveller Wordsworth, he was held up by the conservative press as an example of a young man who had yielded to the charm of Germany: he was judged immoral, Jacobin and, finally, a follower of German philosophy (cf. *Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner*, 9th July 1798, no. 36, p. 636; *Anti-Jacobin Review*, IV, 1799, p. xiii, and VI, 1800, p. 574). At the end of July 1799, Coleridge returned to England and translated Schiller's *Wallenstein*, but it was a complete failure, and the reviews were all negative: according to the reviewers of the main literary magazines, who strongly influenced the taste of the public, Coleridge was "a partizan of German theatre" and of "German philosophy", and, despite his efforts to cover up his past, his name long remained associated with Jacobinism and German literature (cf. Ashton, *The German Idea*, pp. 3–10 and 27–35; Micheli, 'The Early Reception of Kant's Thought in England', pp. 292–295; Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas in England*, in particular pp. 123–133; see also William Hazlitt's review of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* that appeared in August 1817 in the *Edinburgh Review*, now included in W. Hazlitt, *The Complete Works*, ed. by P.P. Howe (London and Toronto, 1930–1934), vol. XVI, pp. 115–138, in particular pp. 123–125 on Coleridge and Kant). This judgement on German literature was destined to last for a long time in British culture, so much so that in 1820 a radical like Hazlitt wrote: "The Goethes, the Lessings, the Schillers, the Kotzebues [...] have made the only incorrigible Jacobins, and their school of poetry is the only real school of Radical Reform" (*Lectures chiefly on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elisabeth* [1820], in Hazlitt, *Complete Works*, vol. VI, p. 362).

climax when, according to Herder, Fichte proclaimed: “*in fünf Jahren ist keine christliche Religion mehr*”.²¹ In Germany, the opinion of the cultivated classes did not distinguish between the doctrine propounded by Kant in the three *Critiques* and the new philosophy taught by Fichte at Jena; but not even Herder distinguished between Kant and Fichte, and when he decided to intervene, his attack was launched against what he considered to be the true source of Fichte’s philosophy, Kant’s first *Critique*. Indeed, many of the arguments contained in the works against Kant published in Great Britain in those months take up the ideas supported by Herder and the circles close to him, albeit in a rough and approximate form²²; it was not by chance that in the first three years of the century, while the interest in Kant and the new German philosophy gradually declined, Herder gained some popularity in England, at a time when the relations with Germany were possible because the territory of Hannover was still under British military control.²³

²¹ Cf. J. von Müller, *Briefwechsel mit Johann Gottfried Herder und Caroline v. Herder*, ed. by K. E. Hoffmann (Schaffhausen, 1952), p. 289. As it is known, at the end of August 1799, Kant himself felt compelled to intervene, publicly disavowing Fichte’s interpretation of critical philosophy; however, Kant’s intervention, which appeared in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, was not such as to make an impression on the ordinary reader (cf. Kant, *Briefe*, Akademie Ausgabe, vol. XII, pp. 370–371).

²² See, for example, the two letters, published respectively in April and August 1800 under the title ‘The literati and literature of Germany’ (*Anti-Jacobin Review*, V, 1800 [April], pp. 568–580, and VI, 1800 [August], pp. 562–580; see also V, 1800, pp. 339–347, 348–350; VI, 1800, pp. 342–349; VII, 1800, pp. 504–508); the two articles in letter form were apparently sent in by James Walker, an outstanding representative of the Episcopal Church of Scotland who was then staying in Weimar; they take up some points typical of Herder’s polemic against Kant’s philosophy. The same arguments are taken up in the item ‘Critical Philosophy’, written by the French expatriate Jean Joseph Mounier (for the first, more explanatory part) and James Walker (for the second part), published in the *Supplements* to the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1801], II, pp. 353–359, where, referring to Kant’s ethics and theology, Walker speaks of the “tendency of the system toward atheism”; and concludes (with a clear reference to ‘Atheismus Streit’ and Fichte): “This being the case, the reader cannot be much surprised, when he is informed that several of Kant’s disciples on the continent have avowed themselves Atheists or Spinosists” (p. 359). On this subject see Micheli, ‘The Early Reception of Kant’s Thought in England’, pp. 289–296.

²³ The *Metakritik* and the other texts relating to Herder’s polemic against Kant were reviewed (*Monthly Magazine*, IX, 1800, p. 671, and X, 1800, p. 617; *British Critic*, XVI, 1800, pp. 460–461; *Anti-Jacobin Review*, XVIII, 1804, pp. 488–490); Herder’s *Ideen* were translated into English in 1800 (*Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, transl. by T. Churchill, London: J. Johnson) and came out in a second edition in 1803 (cf. *Critical Review* [London], XXX, 1800, pp. 1–10, 169–175; *Scots Magazine*, LXII, 1800, p. 114; *British Critic*, XXI, 1803, pp. 154–159; *Monthly Review*, XLI, 1803, pp. 403–420; *Anti-Jacobin Review*, XVIII, 1804, pp. 402–416, and XIX, 1804, pp. 82–96, 491–524). In 1801, a section of Herder’s work *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* was translated into English with the title *Oriental Dialogues: containing the Conversations of Eugenius and Alciphron on the spirit and beauties of the sacred poetry of the Hebrews*, London: T. Cadell (cf. *Anti-Jacobin Review*, XIV, 1803, pp. 353–363); this text exercised a certain influence on several British as well as American theologians. On the reception of Herder in Britain see C. Angerson, “‘A friend to rational piety’: The early reception of Herder by Protestant dissenters in Britain”, *German Life and Letters*, LXIX (2016), pp. 1–21.

8.3 British Historiography of Philosophy: Empiricism and the Scottish School

The interest of the cultivated public in the political and ethical aspects of the new German philosophy, especially that of Kant, quickly vanished around the year 1800; yet the debate over Kant and the developments of German philosophy still continued for another few years, at least among those who concerned themselves with philosophy. Kant's British interpreters, whatever philosophical orientation they followed, were all inclined to identify the problem addressed by Kant with the problem previously addressed by Locke, that is to say, that of the *origin* of ideas; and this led them to read Kant's teaching from an innatistic point of view, thus linking Kant's theses with those of the Scottish school, which they knew much better.

According to the many who, especially in England, shared Hartley's rigid associationistic sensationalism, Kant did nothing but revive the ancient doctrine of innate ideas, a controversy which they considered to have been definitively closed by Locke. For example, Thomas Beddoes, who was one of the few to have a direct knowledge of Kant's texts, in his essay on the nature of demonstrative or mathematical evidence, quoted the Kantian doctrine according to which "we are in possession of certain a priori cognitions", such as "all the propositions in mathematics"; and in a footnote he linked the Kantian thesis, which he judged to be totally erroneous, with the position held by the Scottish school: "Modern writers, in our own language [here he quotes Dugald Stewart and Thomas Reid], express an opinion, similar to that of Mr. Kant, and inevitably fatal to their philosophy of mind".²⁴ A few years later, in June 1799, Henry Crabb Robinson, in a short article (signed Sinboron) in the *Monthly Magazine*, formulated a very similar judgement on Kant; replying to Henry J. Richter, who in an article published one year before in the same magazine, referring to Hume's criticism of the principle of causation, had encouraged British philosophers - whom he considered to have been hitherto incapable of opposing Hume with "a reasonable and consistent theory" - to have recourse to Kant's system, Crabb Robinson wrote: "When I consider the general character of Kant's philosophy, and that is expressly established on the notion of innate ideas [here he refers to Beddoes' essay], I am anxious to shew that we are not driven to the necessity of reviving the buried controversies of the last century, and that we need not

²⁴ T. Beddoes, *Observations on the Nature of Demonstrative Evidence* (London: J. Johnson, 1793), pp. 89–105, in particular pp. 95–96; Beddoes quotes (in English) Kant, *KrV B* 3–5, in connection with Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, I, 1792, p. 73. On Beddoes see above note 17.

raise the spirit of ancient metaphysics which the powerful wand of Locke has been thought to have for ever laid".²⁵

The interpretation of Kant's problem by those who shared the doctrines of the Scottish school was no different, however. In an article published in February 1799 on the state of literature in Germany, which referred to developments in the field of philosophy, we read: "the spell of mysticism which involved the writings of Kant [...] now begins [...] to be gradually dispelled"; Kant's philosophy, like Scottish philosophy, was nothing but a response to the challenge laid down by Hume; for Kant, like the Scots, the unavoidable result of modern philosophy (if not of the entirety of Western thought, from Plato onwards), the distinctive characteristic of which was for Thomas Reid something he called "the theory of ideas", was Hume's scepticism. The 'theory of ideas', which was shared by the continental Cartesian rationalism and British empiricism, assumes that things are not perceived directly, but only through the medium of mental beings, or ideas, which mediate between the

²⁵ Cf. *Monthly Magazine*, IV, Dec. 1797, pp. 533–536 [H.J. Richter]; VII, Jun. 1799, pp. 375–378 [H. Crabb Robinson]. A few months later, in May 1800, Crabb Robinson moved to Germany, where he stayed for over five years, until September 1805; here his intellectual education came to a turning point; at Jena, where he enrolled in 1802, he had the opportunity to hear Schelling and make friends with Jakob F. Fries, and from there he sent a series of letters concerning Kant's philosophy, some of which appeared in a London magazine (*Monthly Register*, I, 1802, pp. 411–416; II, 1803, pp. 6–12; pp. 485–488 [now in Robinson, *Essays on Kant, Schelling, and German Aesthetics*, ed. by J. Vigus (London, 2010) from which we quote here]; cf. Wellek, *Kant in England*, pp. 139–159; D.I. Behler, 'Henry Crabb Robinson as a Mediator of Early German Romanticism to England', *Arcadia*, XII, 1977, pp. 117–155; E. Behler, 'Henry Crabb Robinson und Kant', *Kant-Studien*, LXXVII, 1986, pp. 289–315; G. Maertz, 'Reviewing Kant's Early Reception in Britain. The Leading Role of Henry Crabb Robinson', in *Cultural Interactions in the Romantic Age*, ed. by G. Maertz, Albany, 1998, pp. 209–226). Robinson abandons Hartley's necessarianism and associationist sensationalism and 'converts' to Kantianism: "the mind of man is essentially active, not a mere recipient of impressions; the basis of truth must be sought in the essential laws of mind; whence arise the conceptions *a priori*, not in physics, but in metaphysics" (*Monthly Register*, Nov. 1802 [ed. Fagus, p. 38]). Nevertheless, just as before, he keeps on linking Kant's doctrine, which he now supports, with that of the Scots: "When a translation appears of Kant, I doubt not the first disciples will be of the Scotch school; their alliance with the Kantian principles will be more out of love to the result than out of a genuine and adequate perception of the abstract truth of the system; and it is possible that that school, which has hitherto most distinguished itself for boldness of investigation, will be among the last to accede to the new doctrine" (*Monthly Register*, I, Aug. 1802 [ed. Fagus, p. 31]). In January 1804 Robinson met M.me de Staël in Weimar and apparently tried to introduce her to Kant's philosophy (cf. J. Fagus, 'Zwischen Kantianismus und Schellingianismus: Henry Crabb Robinsons Privatvorlesungen über Philosophie für Madame de Staël 1804 in Weimar', in *Germaine de Staël und ihr erstes deutsches Publikum*, ed. by G. R. Kaiser and O. Müller (Heidelberg, 2008), pp. 355–391); in 1813 he met her again in London, where he could revise the chapters concerning German philosophy contained in the third part of *De l'Allemagne*, which seem indeed to reflect many of Robinson's judgements, characterised by a generic evaluation of Kant's *a priori* in terms of innate notions and above all by a positive appreciation of Kant's ethics. Cf. A.-L.-G. De Staël, *De l'Allemagne* [1813] (Paris, 1968), II, in particular pp. 127–140 and 195–200; on the immediate success enjoyed in Great Britain by M.me de Staël's text, which was translated at once into English (*Germany*, London: Murray, 1813), see Wellek, *Kant in England*, pp. 156–158 and 289, note 46; at any rate, M.me de Staël's text is one of the sources Stewart used for his exposition of German thought from Kant to Schelling (cf. Stewart, *Dissertation*, pp. 392, 395, and 419).

knowing subject and the known object, and are, literally speaking, images of objects, which are simple and unconnected when they get into our minds because complexity only results from subsequent reflection: this doctrine of cognition involves a series of unsolvable contradictions leading to subjective idealism and scepticism; the answer given by the Scottish philosophers consists, on a negative plane, in the refusal of the Cartesian and Lockean doctrine of 'ideas' as 'representations' of objects, and, on a positive plane, in the recognition of principles which precede experience and are independent of it but, nevertheless, are presupposed in any knowledge. In the writer's opinion, Kant shared this criticism of the modern philosophical tradition, dividing "all our knowledge into two classes of (1) *primary, original*, perhaps *innate* knowledge, which must be possessed and believed before we can make any progress in observation and reasoning, and (2) *experimental* knowledge, founded upon that which is primary, and discoverable by reasoning and observation. The *former* it is, in his [Kant's] opinion, an indispensable law of our existence, to believe without demanding those proofs, of which it is, by its nature, unsusceptible. The *latter* is never to be received by the mind without the most rigorous discussions of reasoning. Kant's *primary* knowledge is equivalent to the *knowledge of sentiment* in the Savoyard Curate's Confession of Faith, by Rousseau, - to the *First Truths* of Buffier, - to the *Common Sense* of Reid, Beattie, and Oswald, - to those *instincts* and *senses* which are so multiplied in the writings of Lord Kames"; of course, there are some differences between Kant and the Scottish philosophers, which cannot be ignored: "Kant, in expressing his doctrines, was led to use the technical language of Wolff [...] and hence arises the greater part of his obscurity. [...] But he is, undeniably, a great man, and the first metaphysician in Germany"; we must distinguish Kant's philosophy from the "extravagances of his pupils [i.e. Fichte]", and establish a relation between Kant's philosophy - seen in the light of the same problems which had been raised by Locke and more in general by the philosophers, from Descartes to Hume, who had developed the modern "doctrine of ideas" - and the critical reflection of the Scottish philosophers: "it is in this light", concludes the author, "that Kant's philosophy is now viewed among his fellow-countrymen [i.e. Jacobi, Herder, and Hamann]".²⁶

However, Kant did not go through with his rejection of the 'theory of ideas'. The Scottish philosophers tried to show that the principles upon which all thinking act rests are revealed to us through sensation and above all through ordinary language; it is impossible to justify these principles because they constitute the premise of all justification, and their justification is not necessary if we just become aware that we have knowledge of objects in themselves, not of 'intermediate mental beings', i.e. ideas or representations. By contrast, the Kantian philosophy claimed that it could speculatively justify our cognitive aspirations, and in this way it became in turn entangled in insuperable contradictions, which made it into a mixture of scepticism

²⁶ *Monthly Magazine*, VII, no. 42, Mar 1799, pp. 152–153 (reprinted with several changes in the *New London Review*, I, no. 5, May 1799, pp. 519–520).

and dogmatism.²⁷ In their view, this explained the idealistic developments of Kantianism. A closer look reveals that these criticisms were the same as those that had been directed in Germany in those years against critical philosophy by Hamann, Herder, and especially Jacobi, writers who all enjoyed considerable success in Great Britain, not only in those years but - for Jacobi in particular - also during a considerable part of the nineteenth century.

Of particular interest is a short and schematic history of modern philosophy, which was published in the form of an article in October 1804; the author of this text, originally written in French and then translated into English, was Johann Gottfried Schweighäuser.²⁸ The article reconstructs the developments of German philosophy from Kant (although it reaches back to Locke and Hume) to German idealism; referring to the criticisms formulated by Jacobi, the text suggests to the British reader an interpretation of Kant which is not idealistic but religious and fideistic and which in some respects comes close to the theories of the Scottish school. For over a decade this short text was a source for many writers in Great Britain, among whom, for example, Stewart, in his account of German philosophy in the *Dissertation*²⁹; the text also anticipated some elements of Hamilton's interpretation of Kant's philosophy.

Schweighäuser begins his account with reference to Hume who, "long ago proved that the principles of [Locke's philosophy], taken in the strictest sense, led to universal scepticism", a proposition common to both the Scottish philosophers and to Jacobi, since according to both the Lockean (and Cartesian) 'philosophy of ideas', in the Lockean sense of the third term between the understanding subject and things to be understood, was the cause of Hume's scepticism. Kant was induced by Hume's writings "to attempt a reformation in philosophy"; but Schweighäuser

²⁷ In January 1803, Thomas Brown, one of the most influential exponents of the new generation of the Scottish school, in his review of Charles Villers' essay (*Philosophie de Kant, ou principes fondamentaux de la philosophie transcendente*, Metz: Collignon, 1801) formulated the following observations on Kant's philosophy: "The *egoism* of Berkeley and Hume is largely incorporated in [Kant's] system, and combined with the opposing tenets of the school of Dr. Reid. If, to the *common sense* of that school, we add the *innate susceptibilities* of Leibnitz, and the denial by Hume of *necessary connexion in causation, and of the reality of external perception*, we bring before us the *theory of cognition* of Kant. But the force of common sense, and of the distinction of innate ideas, is invalidated by the denial of the reality of our external knowledge; and the denial of the reality of our perception of objects in space, is invalidated by the adoption of the principle of common sense" (Brown, 'Review of Villers' *Philosophie de Kant*', *Edinburgh Review*, I, 1803, pp. 279–280). This is fundamentally the same accusation of inconsistency that Jacobi aimed at Kant's affirmation that objects produce impressions on our senses: "This", Jacobi observed, "cannot be affirmed either of phenomena, since they are supposed to be simple ideas, or of things in themselves, for we know absolutely nothing about them since they depend upon the purely subjective form of our thought, i.e. the form that belongs exclusively to our particular sensitivity" (Jacobi, *David Hume* [1787, 1795²], in *Werke*, Leipzig, 1812–1825, vol. II, pp. 291–310).

²⁸ J.G. Schweighäuser, 'On the Present State of Philosophy in Germany', *Monthly Magazine*, XVIII, no. 120, Oct. 1804, pp. 204–208; on Johann Gottfried Schweighäuser (1776–1844), a philologist and archaeologist who taught at Strasbourg, cf. ADB, XXXIII, pp. 351–357.

²⁹ Cf. Stewart, *Dissertation*, p. 420.

thought that he should have posed the problem in terms of 'immediate certainty'. Kant, on the contrary, claimed to explain the knowledge of objects through an enquiry into its origin in the operations of the understanding; but, continues Schweighäuser, whenever we try to show that our knowledge of the existence of objects is mediated by the understanding, we inevitably fall 'into the trap of idealism'. Here the author expresses a thesis of Jacobi which English readers could easily associate with the doctrines of the Scottish philosophers, who were more familiar to them: "[Kant] ought rather to have suited himself to human imbecility, and to have been contented to follow, with the eye of an observer, that kind of re-action, which the understanding produces on the sensations, to convert them into ideas, instead of soaring beyond it in a manner which appears to me to have led his successors astray". Schweighäuser does not go any further in analysing Kant's doctrine; his overall judgement on Kant's theoretical philosophy is a repetition of that expressed by Jacobi: "His works on speculative philosophy are a mixture of scepticism and dogmatism, clouded with great obscurity, and containing many inconsistencies and even contradictions, as has lately been proved by Jacobi, one of the most ingenious German writers". His opinion of Kantian ethics was much more positive: "it was a sublime spectacle in an age debased by materialism and immorality, to behold a moral system established upon a basis placed by the Creator in every mind, [...] on a profound and powerful sentiment which admits of no comparison with any other, of no accommodation with base and material interests". He derived this interpretation of Kantian ethics from Jacobi, but the English could easily see in it very close analogies with the moral theories of the Scots. Traces of Jacobi's polemic against any rationalistic and formalistic conception of man could be found in the critical observations which concluded the examination of Kantian ethics: "unfortunately even this part of Kant's works contains some obscurities, and is embarrassed with too subtle disquisitions, which destroy a portion of the enthusiasm inspired by his principles, and appear capable of being reduced to formulae which men of inferior talents have actually substituted in their minds, instead of the sentiments with which this doctrine ought to inflame their hearts".³⁰

Kant's ambiguities and contradictions were the reason for the idealistic developments of German philosophy: "Fichte [...] was not content with the researches which Kant had made into the profundities of the human understanding; he justly conceived that the great question on the manner in which the ideas of objects come to the mind and present those objects as existing out of us, though we feel and can only feel within us, was but imperfectly resolved by the philosopher of Königsberg. But instead of proclaiming it to be unanswerable, instead of acknowledging that this is the mystery of our existence, that it is one of those primitive facts which we are obliged to admit, and beyond which it is impossible to ascend either in metaphysics or natural philosophy, he [Fichte] was desirous of resolving the difficulty, and explored anew the abysses of thought, till he discovered a kind of explanation". Schweighäuser briefly set out the doctrines of Fichte, quoting passages from his

³⁰ Schweighäuser, 'On the Present State', pp. 204–205.

Wissenschaftslehre on the dialectic of Ego and non-Ego: the new doctrine, however, far from solving the problem, “paved the way for an idealism still more incomprehensible [...]” and overturned “all the bases of morality and even the existence of the Deity”.³¹ This was Jacobi’s thesis: Kant’s transcendental idealism led inevitably to the abandonment of the doctrine of the thing in itself and to Fichte’s subjective idealism.

Fichte’s system “made way for that of Schelling [...], at the same time a metaphysician and naturalist [...]. Schelling is reproached with being almost always in suspense between idealism, realism, and even materialism”. Schelling developed Fichte’s ideas and applied them to the natural sciences, producing a “system of general physics deduced *a priori* from certain propositions given as axioms of thought”. Schelling “excelled Fichte in a method” that “consists in treating the universe as a synoptic table; in constantly opposing facts, contrary to each other, and seeking the general fact, the common principle by which they are united. This general fact is then regarded as a secondary fact to which another is opposed; it is presumed that one still more general exists which comprehends both; and this process is continued as long as possible. By this operation, which the author himself compares to the integral calculus, and to which he has given mathematical forms, he, at length, arrives at the primitive unity, in which thought and matter, rest and motion, existence and non-existence, are united. He then produces all nature, at pleasure, by the differential calculus [...] His primitive unity is neither God nor matter, it is both, nothing is perceived distinctly, it is a mathematical point, but it becomes every thing in the hand of the speculator. The universe is produced from it by an *evolution* which has no limits”; and Schweighäuser concludes: “this system is derived from that of Spinoza, combined with Fichte’s ideas”.³²

The article closes with a short account of Jacobi’s thought, which Schweighäuser clearly prefers: “from the very infancy of Kantism, he [Jacobi] foresaw the effect [i.e. the system of Schelling and Hegel] it would produce on the minds of its adherents”, and tried to provide a remedy by holding to tradition: “Jacobi places at the head of his doctrine a personal, intelligent, and remunerating Deity. He thinks that this Deity has not given us the torch of reason and the compass of the heart for no purpose; that he has imparted to each creature as much truth as life; that the manner in which we communicate with external nature, and even our very existence are above our comprehension, but that we ought to resign ourselves with confidence to the means which are given us for acquiring knowledge, to the sentiments with which we are inspired for developing our moral and intellectual nature; and that we run the risk of destroying every thing by wishing to explain every thing [...]; all philosophy purely speculative leads us far astray from truths the most essential, and the most evident to eyes that are not fascinated; [...] every explanation, every demonstration must go back to some axiom, to some primitive fact which serves for its basis, and

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 205–206.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 206–207; besides Schelling, the author also mentions Hegel, who is defined as the most renowned of his followers; this is perhaps the first time Hegel’s name appears in a British periodical.

which is itself incapable of demonstration, otherwise we must ascend to infinity without ever being able to flatter ourselves that we should arrive at a point that would remove our doubts. These axioms, these facts are given us, according to Jacobi, for external objects, by our senses and our reason; for moral truths, by our internal sentiments, by our conscience, and our moral nature". He concludes his account of Jacobi's thought with the following words: "He [Jacobi] says, with Pascal, that 'nature refutes the Pyrrhonians, and reason the dogmatists; that we have an imbecility invincible to all dogmatism, and an idea of truth invincible to all Pyrrhonism'. He [Jacobi] maintains that the most important truths, those which establish the moral liberty of man, the reality of an immaterial and immortal principle, the existence of a God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, are not to be proved, but that they are felt, and are revealed by the heart".³³

Noteworthy is also the history of English philosophy planned by William Hazlitt; the manuscript of this work, which was never published although the author made every effort to find subscribers enough to finance it, was most probably ready by 1809³⁴; in an eight-page pamphlet printed in 1809 with the aim of inviting the public to subscribe for the work, Hazlitt wrote: "The design of the work which is here offered to the notice of the public will be, first and more immediately, to give a clear, condensed, and satisfactory account of the principal English philosophers who have treated on moral and metaphysical subjects from the time of Lord Bacon to the present day [...]. Secondly, it will be the writer's object [...] to act as a judge or umpire between them, to distinguish (as far as he is able) the boundaries of true and false

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 207–208. Jacobi frequently quotes in his writings this passage by Blaise Pascal (*Pensées* [...], Amsterdam, 1758, vol. II, art. XXI, pp. 127 and 131); cf. *Über die Lehre des Spinoza*, in Jacobi, *Werke* (Hamburg, 1998), vol. 1/1, pp. 54, 129–130, and 346, and *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus*, in *Werke*, vol. 2/1, p. 8.

³⁴ D. Wu, 'Hazlitt's Unpublished History of English Philosophy: The Larger Context', *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, VII (2006), 1, pp. 25–64; see also S. Burley, *Hazlitt the Dissenter: Religion, Philosophy, and Politics, 1766–1816* (Basingstoke, 2014) pp. 91–123; H. Baker, *William Hazlitt* (Cambridge, MA, 1962) pp. 181–190; P. Hunnekuhl, 'Hazlitt, Crabb Robinson, and Kant: 1806 and beyond', *The Hazlitt Review*, X (2017), pp. 45–62. In February 1809 a letter by Hazlitt appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* (XXVII, pp. 15–19) with the title *Proposal for the Basis of a New System of Metaphysical Philosophy* (now in *New Writings of William Hazlitt*, ed. by D. Wu, Oxford, 2007, vol. I, pp. 3–13). In the same period an eight-page pamphlet was printed with the following title: *Proposals for Publishing, in One Large Volume, Quarto* (Price 1 l. 10s. to Subscribers), *A History of English philosophy*, by the Author of *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, and *An Abridgement of the Light of Nature Pursued* (now entitled *Prospectus of a History of English Philosophy*, included in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. by P.P. Howe, London 1930–1934, II, pp. 112–119 and 288–289). These two texts – the letter dated February 1809 and the *Prospectus* – are, as far as the content is concerned, exactly the same; the *Prospectus* also includes a table of contents that summarises the ten chapters into which the work is subdivided (pp. 288–289; see also Wu, 'Hazlitt's Unpublished History', p. 43). The invitation to subscribe for the work was renewed a few years later, in 1812–13, on the occasion of a course of lectures on the history of philosophy Hazlitt held in London from January to April 1812, and then again in 1818–19; only the contents of some of these lectures are preserved and were published posthumously by his son (*Literary Remains of the late William Hazlitt*, ed. by W. Hazlitt Jr. (London, 1836).

philosophy, and try if he cannot lay the foundation of a system more conformable to reason and experience, and, in its practical results at least, approaching nearer to the common sense of mankind, than the one which has been generally received by the most knowing persons who have attended to such subjects within the last century; I mean the material, or *modern*, philosophy, as it has been called [...]. According to this philosophy [...] the mind itself is nothing, and external impression everything. All thought is to be resolved into *sensation*, all morality into the *love of pleasure*, and all action into *mechanical impulse*".³⁵ The contents of the *History* were to have been as follows: a first chapter, with an introductory function, was devoted to the systems of the ancients, Plato and Aristotle, and to Scholastic philosophy (as well as to "the attempts made to reform it by Roger Bacon"); there followed an exposition of the thought of Francis Bacon, who reacted to the "logomachies" of the Scholastics insisting "on the necessity of experience. He laid the most stress upon this, because it was the most needed at the time, particularly in natural science"; the judgement on Bacon was therefore decidedly positive, unlike that expressed on his successors, who incurred in the error opposed to that of the Scholastics: "we despised experience altogether before: now we would have nothing but experience, and that of the grossest kind [...]. This original bias in favour of mechanical reasoning and physical experiment, which took its rise from the previous total neglect of them in matters where they were strictly necessary, was strengthened by the powerful aid of Hobbes, who was indeed the father of modern philosophy. [...] He was by nature a materialist. Locke assisted greatly in giving popularity to the same scheme, as well by espousing many of Hobbes's metaphysical principles [...]. And it has of late received its last polish and roundness in the hands of some French philosophers, as Condillac, and others". Certainly, both in England and on the Continent, there were philosophers who disagreed with this line of thought, "spiritual writers" – as Hazlitt defines them – like Cudworth and Boyle, then Clarke, Butler, and Price; a chapter was then devoted to the Scottish school.³⁶ In the final chapter, writes Hazlitt in the *Prospectus*, "having thus explained [...] the grounds of my dissent from this system of philosophy [i.e. the material, or *modern*, philosophy], and shown that they do not militate against the true basis of all philosophy, experience, in any rational sense of the word, I shall proceed to state some of the principles which it would be my object to establish in the progress of the work": his aim is a system of philosophy which, "by incorporating - as Bacon has done - the abstract with the concrete, and general notions with individual objects, [may give] our reasoning that solidity and firmness which they must otherwise always want", a system of philosophy which comes as near as possible "to the common sense of mankind", a "philosophy" which is "little more than common sense *well understood*".³⁷

Indeed, these short essays on the history of modern philosophy – which all appeared between the mid 1790s and the first years of the new century in British

³⁵ *Prospectus*, p. 113; cf. *New Writings*, I, p. 4.

³⁶ *Prospectus*, pp. 114–116, 288–289; cf. *New Writing*, I, pp. 4–8.

³⁷ *Prospectus*, pp. 113, 115–116, 289; cf. *New Writing*, I, pp. 9–12.

magazines and therefore enjoyed a wide circulation – provided the cultivated British readers with a key for interpreting the latest philosophical thought, establishing a connection between the developments, in some cases obscure, of the philosophy elaborated on the Continent and some elements of the more familiar British philosophical tradition. In this way, Kant's philosophy and to some extent even the idealistic developments of Kantianism were included in an organic and coherent picture of the whole of modern philosophy, from Descartes and Locke to the Scottish philosophers, which regarded the 'theory of ideas' as the distinctive feature of modern thought – classical empiricism as well as classical rationalism, both considered to be 'Cartesian' or 'idealist' (or 'nihilist', to use the term coined by Jacobi and taken up by Hamilton) – and identified the overcoming of the aporias of modern philosophy in the connection of radical empiricism and rationalistic intuitionism which was maintained by the Scottish school of 'common sense'.

This interpretative scheme was transmitted to French eclectic philosophy, which was strongly influenced by the Scottish school, and it also appears in the historiographical works produced in Britain throughout the nineteenth century. We find it again, for example, in the presentation of modern philosophy contained in Dugald Stewart's *Dissertation*, a text which enjoyed great popularity in Britain during the nineteenth century.³⁸ According to Stewart, Kant's intention was to provide an explanation for the problem of the origin of ideas; the doctrine of categories is Kant's answer to Hume's theory of causation, but in Stewart's view there is a close similarity between this part of Kant's system and the argument "which Cudworth opposed to Hobbes and Gassendi considerably more than a century ago"; the

³⁸ As we have already noted, the *Dissertation* was published as a supplement to the editions IV-VI of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; it was then reprinted – with annotations and additions, and comprising an outline of the third part, which concerned moral philosophy and had remained hitherto unpublished – in the edition of Stewart's works edited by Hamilton, in which it occupies the first volume (*The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, ed. by W. Hamilton, vol. 1, Edinburgh, 1854 [1877²], from which we quote here); on Stewart as a historian of modern philosophy, cf. *Models*, III, pp. 443–472. The methodological principles and historiographical theses which inspired Stewart's dissertation are also to be found, to a large extent, in the history of moral doctrines by James Mackintosh (1765–1832), who was a disciple of Stewart. The text was written by Mackintosh for the seventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, where it was published in the first volume together with the preliminary historical dissertations by Stewart (on metaphysics), John Playfair and John Leslie (on mathematics and physical sciences); however, the text was also published autonomously and in the course of the century saw several other editions (*A Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy, chiefly during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, [privately printed] Edinburgh, 1830; another edition appeared with a preface by W. Whewell, Edinburgh, 1836, 1862³, 1872⁴). Mackintosh's *Dissertation*, which briefly mentions the moral doctrines of the ancient and medieval world, distinguishes between two lines of development in the history of modern ethical doctrines, from Grotius to Paley and Bentham up to the Scotsman Stewart: on one side, utilitarianism, in its various versions, and on the other side, the doctrines founded on the universal sentiment of duty, such as for example that of the Scottish school. The distinction of moral systems into two large groups – on one hand utilitarian ethics and on the other the ethics of duty, or deontology – is taken up by Whewell in the preface to Mackintosh's *Dissertation*, and later on, taking Kantian tones, in Whewell, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy in England* (London: J.W. Parker, 1852).

principle Kant takes as his starting point is, “that there are various notions and truths, the knowledge of which is altogether independent of experience, and is consequently obtained by the exercise of our rational faculties, unaided by any information derived from without”, but this had already been maintained by the Cambridge Neoplatonists and in general by the Platonists of all ages, and more recently by Hume’s Scottish adversaries.³⁹

Similar, albeit more refinedly formulated, is the interpretation of modern thought emerging from the production of a pupil of Stewart, William Hamilton, who in the nineteenth century continued in Britain the tradition of the Scottish school. Unlike his predecessors, Hamilton had gained a direct knowledge of German philosophy, from Leibniz to Kant and the post-Kantian philosophers, in particular Fries, Beneke, and especially Jacobi. Hamilton was also the first to introduce Kant into British academic culture.⁴⁰ However, the interpretative schemes he used to analyse the developments of modern thought were fundamentally the same.

His first essay on German philosophy appeared in October 1829 in the form of a review of Cousin’s *Cours de Philosophie. Introduction à l’histoire de la*

³⁹ Stewart, *Dissertation*, pp. 398–406. It is from Born’s Latin translation that Stewart quotes the passage from the preface to Kant’s *Prolegomena* (Akademie Ausgabe, III, pp. 257–261) that contains Kant’s famous reference to Hume and his Scottish critics; Stewart compares it with passages written by Ralph Cudworth, and Richard Price, and then remarks: “It is difficult to discover anything in the foregoing passage on which Kant could found a claim to the slightest originality. A variety of English writers had, long before this work [i.e. *Prol.*] appeared, replied to Mr. Hume, by observing that the understanding is itself a source of new ideas, and that it is from this source that our notions of cause and effect are derived [...]. In the works of Dr. Reid, many remarks of the same nature are to be found” (*Dissertation*, p. 405). This theory is reiterated a little further on, when he presents the doctrine of the Scottish school: “On comparing the opposition which Mr. Hume’s scepticism encountered from his own countrymen, with the account formerly given of the attempts of some German philosophers to refute his Theory of Causation, it is impossible not to be struck with the coincidence between the leading views of his most eminent antagonists. This coincidence one would have been disposed to consider as purely accidental, if Kant, by his petulant sneers at Reid, Beattie, and Oswald, had not expressly acknowledged, that he was not unacquainted with their writings. As for the great discovery, which he seems to claim as his own – that the ideas of Cause and Effect, as well as many others, are derived from the *pure understanding* without any aid from experience, it is nothing more than a repetition, in very nearly the same terms, of what was advanced a century before by Cudworth, in reply to Hobbes and Gassendi; and borrowed avowedly by Cudworth from the reasonings of Socrates, as reported by Plato, in answer to the scepticism of Protagoras” (*Dissertation*, pp. 460–461). This evidently constitutes a prejudiced interpretation of the Kantian *a priori*: according to these interpreters, the category intervenes, just like the *a priori* principles of the Scottish philosophers, during experience, hence after experience has developed in some way, almost as though the *a priori*, i.e. the category, was an innate idea, a content, and not, on the contrary, as though that which is *a priori* was the form of judgement. This was a widely held interpretation of Kant, however; it is also found in Antonio Rosmini, who in his *Nuovo saggio sull’origine delle idee* (I, sect. IV, ch. III, nos 325–326) interprets the Kantian categories by explicitly referring to Thomas Reid (cf. G. Santinello, *Le prime traduzioni italiane dell’opera di Kant*, in *La tradizione kantiana in Italia*, Messina, 1981, pp. 318–323).

⁴⁰ Cf. Wellek, *Kant in England*, p. 62.

philosophie.⁴¹ Hamilton's concern was to place Reid's philosophy of common sense within a historical picture ranging from Aristotle to Scholastic and modern philosophy – in particular German philosophy – up to Cousin..⁴²

In his essay on Cousin, Hamilton observes that, as concerns the knowledge of the Absolute, or Unconditioned, only four positions are possible: 1. the Unconditioned is incognisable and inconceivable; 2. it is not an object of knowledge, but its concept, as a regulative principle, is more than a mere negation of the Conditioned; 3. it is cognisable, but not conceivable; 4. it is both cognisable and conceivable.⁴³

The first position is that of Hamilton and the Scottish philosophers: knowledge is always relative, or phenomenal; to think means to subject the object of thought to the conditions of our thinking faculty; “*to think is to condition*”; and conditional

⁴¹ W. Hamilton, ‘On the Philosophy of the Unconditioned; in reference to Cousin’s Doctrine of the Infinito-Absolute’, *Edinburgh Review*, L, no. 99, Oct. 1829, pp. 194–221 (repr. in Hamilton, *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform*, 2nd ed., London, 1853, pp. 1–38, from which we quote here): this is an extensive review of V. Cousin’s *Cours de philosophie. Introduction à l’histoire de la philosophie* (Paris: Pichon et Didier, 1828). On Hamilton’s ‘philosophy of conditioned’ see G. Graham, ‘A Re-examination of Sir William Hamilton’s Philosophy’, in *Scottish Philosophy in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by G. Graham (Oxford, 2015), pp. 47–66.

⁴² Cf. note A in the edition of Reid’s works edited by Hamilton (*The Works of Thomas Reid*, Preface, notes and supplementary Dissertations, by W. Hamilton, 6th ed., Edinburgh, 1863, II, pp. 742–803, in particular pp. 770–802) and the scheme of the general history of philosophy in Hamilton, *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic*, ed. by H.L. Mansel and J. Veitch (Edinburgh, London, 1859–60) vol. I, pp. 104–109.

⁴³ “To explain the nature of the problem itself [...] it is necessary to premise a statement of the opinions which may be entertained regarding the Unconditioned (Absolute and Infinite), as an immediate object of knowledge and of thought. These opinions may be reduced to *four*: – 1. The Unconditioned is incognisable and inconceivable; its notion being only negative of the Conditioned, which last can alone be positively known or conceived; – 2. It is not an object of knowledge; but its notion, as a regulative principle of the mind itself, is more than a mere negation of the Conditioned. – 3. It is cognisable, but not conceivable; it can be known by a sinking back into identity with the Infinito-Absolute, but it is incomprehensible by consciousness and reflection, which are only of the relative and the different. – 4. It is cognisable and conceivable by consciousness and reflection, under relation, difference, and plurality. The first of these opinions we regard as true; the second is held by Kant; the third by Schelling; and the last by our author [i.e. Cousin]” (Hamilton, *Discussions*, p. 12). Here Hamilton uses the term ‘inconceivable’ in the sense of ‘inexplicable’, that is to say not deducible from something else; this is pointed out by John Stuart Mill, who, referring to this text, observes: “The first meaning of Inconceivable is, that of which the mind cannot form to itself any representation; either (as in the case of Noumena) because no attributes are given, out of which a representation could be framed, or because the attributes given are incompatible with one another – are such as the mind cannot put together in a single image [...]. But there is another meaning [...]. It is often said, that we are unable to conceive *as possible* that which, in itself, we are perfectly well able to conceive: we are able, it is admitted, to conceive it as an imaginary object, but unable to conceive it realized. This extends the term inconceivable to every combination of facts which to the mind simply contemplating it, appears incredible. [...] He [Hamilton] gives to the term a third sense [...]. ‘We think, we conceive, we comprehend a thing, only as we think it as within or under something else’ [...]. The inconceivable, in this third sense, is simply the inexplicable” (*An Examination of Sir William Hamilton’s Philosophy*, in J.S. Mill, *Collected Works*, IX, Toronto, 1979, pp. 69–76).

limitation is the fundamental law of the possibility of thought. For, as the greyhound cannot outstrip his shadow, nor [...] the eagle outsoar the atmosphere in which he floats, and by which alone he is supported; so the mind cannot transcend that sphere of limitation, within and through which exclusively the possibility of thought is realised [...]. Thought cannot transcend consciousness; consciousness is only possible under the antithesis of a subject and object of thought, known only in correlation, and mutually limiting each other; while, independently of this, all that we know either of subject or object, either of mind or matter, is only a knowledge in each of the particular, of the plural, of the different, of the modified, of the phenomenal. [...]. The consequence of this doctrine is, - that philosophy, if viewed as more than a science of the Conditioned, is impossible".⁴⁴

The second position is that of Kant, who, at least up until a certain point, is "fundamentally the same as the preceding"; science only exists with reference to phenomena; metaphysics is declared to be impossible. However, Hamilton is interested in the negative side of critical philosophy. According to Hamilton, the "distinctive peculiarity" of Kant's transcendental Idealism is "its special demonstration of the absolute subjectivity of space or extension, and in general of the primary attributes of matter": the fact of having assigned to space and time the function of being receptive conditions entails the consequence that not only the 'secondary' qualities but also the so-called 'primary' qualities become depending on the way of cognising of the human mind, producing the distinction, typical of critical philosophy, between phenomenal object and an 'in itself' which is totally unknown because it is absolutely indeterminate, and which, however, we cannot help accepting as a basis of the object which is determinate for us.⁴⁵ Hamilton, on the other hand, thinks that the deduction of the categories of the understanding and of the ideas of reason are "the work of a great but perverse ingenuity". Hamilton rejects Kant's distinction between understanding and reason: both faculties pursue the same purpose, that is, they seek "the one in the many; the idea is only the concept sublimated into the inconceivable; Reason is only the Understanding which has *overleaped itself*"; he also rejects the distinction between knowing and thinking, and especially Kant's idea of a natural and inevitable dialectic of reason. The partiality of Kantianism becomes manifest in its consequences: Kant's doctrine "leads to absolute scepticism. Speculative reason, on Kant's own admission, is an organ of mere delusion. The Idea of the Unconditioned, about which it is conversant, is shown to involve insoluble contradictions, and yet to be the legitimate product of intelligence".⁴⁶ Hence, on the one hand, Hamilton shares Kant's 'phenomenalism', but, on the other, he is also a

⁴⁴ Hamilton, *Discussions*, pp. 14–15.

⁴⁵ Cf. note D in the edition of Reid's works edited by Hamilton (*The Works of Thomas Reid* [1858], p. 845); see also Hamilton, *Discussions*, pp. 5–6, 15–16, 18; Id., *Lectures*, vol. II, pp. 113–114.

⁴⁶ Hamilton, *Discussions*, pp. 16–18; on the antinomies, see also Id., *Lectures*, vol. I, p. 402: "[...] Kant did not stop here. He endeavoured to evince that pure Reason, that Intelligence is naturally, is necessarily, repugnant with itself, and that speculation ends in a series of insoluble antilogies. In its highest potency, in its very essence, thought is thus infected with contradiction; and the worst and most pervading scepticism is the melancholy result".

realist: against the sceptics or the “idealists”, and in accordance with Reid, Jacobi, and Hemsterhuis, he maintains that we have direct consciousness and an immediate perception of the outer world as actually existing, the reality of which should not be demonstrated, but is immediately known.⁴⁷

The third is the position of Schelling and of his school but, before him, also that of Cusanus and, in the ancient world, Plotinus. According to Schelling, philosophy is knowledge of the Absolute, although not conceptual knowledge, which involves conditions, difference, plurality, but knowledge through “intellectual intuition”, in which “there exists no distinction of subject and object, no contrast of knowledge and existence; all difference is lost in mere indifference, all plurality in simple unity”; there is neither distinction between subject and object nor opposition between knowledge and existence; all difference vanishes into mere indifference, and all multiplicity into unity. Here philosophy is founded “on the annihilation of consciousness, and on the identification of the unconscious philosopher with God”. This has been acknowledged, observes Hamilton, by “the two most distinguished followers of Schelling”: Hegel, who abandons his master and considers “*pure* or *undetermined existence* as convertible with *pure nothing*, whilst [Lorenz] Oken [...] intrepidly identifies the Deity or Absolute with zero. God he makes the Nothing, the Nothing, he makes God”; in Hamilton’s view, Schelling’s system is nothing other than “a mere scheme of words”.⁴⁸

Finally, the fourth position is that of Cousin, although it must be noted that the doctrine of the Unconditioned criticised here by Hamilton is nothing other than Hegel’s system in the simplified form developed by Cousin; the absolute as a process, a mediation, a result, the theory of the ideality of the finite, the identity of ‘real’ and ‘rational’, and of philosophy with its history: these elements are all present in Hamilton’s account of Cousin’s doctrine.⁴⁹ In the text published in 1829 these doctrines are all ascribed to Cousin alone, whereas in the notes added to the edition of 1852 there are several interesting references to Hegel; dialectic, which is the ladder “by which Hegel attempts to scale the Absolute”, rests, according to Hamilton,

⁴⁷ “If I have done anything meritorious in philosophy, it is in the attempt to explain the phaenomena of these contradictions [i.e. Kant’s antinomies]; in showing that they arise only when intelligence transcends the limits to which its legitimate exercise is restricted; and that within those bounds, (the Conditioned), natural thought is neither fallible nor mendacious [...]. If this view be correct, Kant’s antinomies, with their consequent scepticism, are solved; and the human mind, however weak, is shown not to be the work of a treacherous Creator. Reid, on the contrary, did not subvert the trustworthiness of the one witness, on whose absolute veracity he relied. In his hands natural, (and, therefore, necessary), thought, – Consciousness, – Common Sense, – are always held out as entitled to our implicit and thorough-going confidence” (Hamilton, *Lectures*, vol. I, p. 402); for the references to Hemsterhuis and Jacobi, see also the notes in the edition of Reid’s works edited by Hamilton (*The Works of Reid*, vol. II, pp. 792–793; see also vol. I, p. 129).

⁴⁸ Cf. Hamilton, *Discussions*, pp. 19–23.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 7–12 and 23–31.

on two logical errors: he mistakes contraries for contradictories, and in logic he stumbles on the so-called ‘aporia of the beginning’.⁵⁰

This interpretation of the history of modern thought, which considers Hume’s scepticism as the outcome of the ‘philosophy of ideas’, both in its rationalistic-Cartesian version and in its empiricist-Lockean version, and establishes a comparison between the “Scottish answer” and the “German answer” to Hume, continued during the second half of the nineteenth century and was also present in thinkers who were much closer to the idealistic tradition, such as Andrew Seth, who, still in 1885, perhaps just in order to render German philosophy more acceptable in Great Britain, held the fundamental identity between the Scottish doctrine of ‘common sense’ and Kant’s theory.⁵¹

8.4 The Historiography of Philosophy in Coleridge and His School

Hamilton’s position is only apparently similar to that of Kant, and it must also be noted that his knowledge of German thought was rather incomplete. Indeed, in Great Britain, during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was the only writer who had direct knowledge of almost all the works of Kant and the post-Kantians as well as those of the early idealists, in particular Fichte, Schelling, and the Schellingians; on the contrary, his knowledge of Hegel was very limited.⁵² Many of his writings of a more purely philosophical nature remained unpublished, and during the nineteenth century his influence in Britain

⁵⁰“Hegel’s whole philosophy is indeed founded on two errors; — on a mistake in logic, and on a violation of logic. In his dream of disproving the law of Excluded Middle (between two Contradictories), he [Hegel] inconceivably mistakes Contraries for Contradictories; and in positing pure or absolute existence as a mental datum, immediate, intuitive, and above proof (though, in truth, this be palpably a mere relative gained by a process of abstraction), he not only mistakes the fact, but violates the logical law which prohibits us to assume the principle which it behoves us to prove. On these two fundamental errors rests Hegel’s Dialectic; and Hegel’s Dialectic is the ladder by which he attempts to scale the Absolute” (Hamilton, *Discussions*, pp. 24–25 note).

⁵¹Cf. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, *Scottish Philosophy: a Comparison of the Scottish and German Answer to Hume* (Edinburgh, 1885 [1907]), p. 4–6.

⁵²In the summer of 1818 Coleridge obtained a copy (now in the British Museum) of *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Nürnberg, 1812–16); he made annotations to it, which, however, are not present after page 91; and as the leaves after this are often uncut, it seems likely that he read no further (cf. Coleridge, *Marginalia*, II, p. 988); as far as we know, Coleridge did not read any other texts by Hegel; on Coleridge and Hegel’s philosophy see also A. Roy, ‘The Specter of Hegel in Coleridge’s *Biographia literaria*’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, LXVIII (2007), no. 2, pp. 279–304.

was considerable in the field of theology, but very limited in that of philosophy.⁵³ Nevertheless, Coleridge was the only English thinker during the first decades of the century who concerned himself actively with the study of Kant; indeed, his philosophy is itself nothing other than an attempt to overcome the limits critical philosophy places on metaphysics. The interpretation of Kantianism elaborated by Coleridge is clearly Platonic. The definitions Coleridge provides of the functions of the understanding in its theoretical use are orientated towards Kantianism, just like his concept of theoretical reason (or scientific, or discursive reason), which corresponds to the Kantian notion of reason in its hypothetical or logical use and which he also defines with the expression “rationalized understanding”.⁵⁴ A considerable part of his *Treatise of Logic*, which remained unfinished, is nothing but a summary of Kantian Aesthetics and Analytics.⁵⁵ Coleridge departs from Kant when he introduces the concept of practical reason. The various definitions he provides to designate practical reason, such as “contemplative faculty”, “intuitive faculty”, “fountain of ideas”, “the mind’s eye”, “the organ of the Supersensuous”, “the inward eye”, show that for him, and for the whole Platonic tradition, reason is the organ of intellectual intuition which brings us into immediate contact with truth; this is why, he considers reason to be closer to sense than to the understanding (cf. Cheyne, *Coleridge’s Contemplative Philosophy*, pp. 192–193): just as sense gives us an

⁵³ Coleridge’s works of a philosophical nature, or containing extensive references to philosophy, are: *Biographia Literaria* (1817), *Lay Sermons* (1818), *The Friend* (1818), and *Aids to Reflection* (1825); but his influence was also considerable on the level of personal contacts. The first to recognise Coleridge’s role in the English philosophical culture of the time was John Stuart Mill, who spoke of “Germano-Coleridgean doctrine”, as an expression of the “revolt of the human mind against the philosophy of the eighteenth century. It is ontological, because that was experimental; conservative, because that was innovative; religious, because so much of that was infidel; concrete and historical, because that was abstract and metaphysical; poetical, because that was matter-of-fact and prosaic” ([*London and*] *Westminster Review*, XXXIII, no. 65, Mar, 1840, p. 2; now in J.S. Mill, *Collected Works*, Toronto, 1969, vol. X, p. 125). On Coleridge and German philosophy, in addition to Muirhead’s classical monograph *Coleridge as Philosopher* (London, 1930) see E. Winkelmann, *Coleridge und die kantische Philosophie: erste Einwirkungen des deutschen Idealismus in England* (Leipzig, 1933); G.N. Orsini, *Coleridge and German Idealism* (Carbondale, 1969); D.M. MacKinnon, ‘Coleridge and Kant’, in *Coleridge’s Variety. Bicentenary Studies*, ed. by J. Beer (London, 1974), pp. 183–203; R. Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature* (Tallahassee, 1985) [on Schelling]; E. Shaffer, ‘Coleridge and Kant’s Giant Hand’, in *Anglo-German Affinities and Antipathies*, ed. by R. Görner (München, 2004) pp. 39–56; P. Hamilton, *Coleridge and German Philosophy: The Poet in the Land of Logic* (London and New York, 2007); M. Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas in England, 1796–1817* (London, 2012); P. Cheyne, *Coleridge’s Contemplative Philosophy* (Oxford, 2020), in part. pp. 222–225; 342–350.

⁵⁴ “[...] Vis rationalis (the Reason or rationalized understanding) comprehends [...]. Reason, therefore, in this secondary sense, and used *not* as a spiritual *Organ* but as a *Faculty* (namely, the Understanding or Soul *enlightened* by that organ) – Reason, I say, or the *scientific* Faculty, is the Intellection of the *possibility* or *essential* properties of things by means of the Laws that constitute them” (*The Friend* [1818], in Coleridge, *Collected Works*, IV, 1, pp. 157–158; see Cheyne, *Coleridge’s Contemplative Philosophy*, pp. 170–175).

⁵⁵ Cf. S.T. Coleridge, *Logic*, ed. by J.R. de J. Jackson, in Coleridge, *Collected Works*, XIII, Princeton, 1981, pp. 150–271.

immediate perception of the sensible, so reason gives us an immediate apprehension of the intelligible, a “intuitive reason” which, however, as in the later Jacobi, is faith and sentiment.⁵⁶

Coleridge transposed this conception to the history of philosophy and made it the key to interpreting the entire historical development of philosophy. Coleridge had always cultivated a lively interest in the history of philosophy; in his youth, around the mid 1790s, he read Brucker’s *Historia critica*, Stanley, and Enfield’s manual⁵⁷; the history of philosophy then became the introductory part of the system to which he applied himself during the last two decades of his life, but which was to remain only an outline.⁵⁸ Between December 1818 and March 1819, he held fourteen lectures on the history of ancient, medieval, and modern philosophy in London; this series of lessons, which was announced in a printed *Prospectus* and publicised in London newspapers, was attended by a fairly large public⁵⁹; except for the first, these lectures were taken down in shorthand with the object of publishing them,

⁵⁶ “I should have no objection to define Reason with Jacobi, and with his friend Hemsterhuis, as an organ bearing the same relation to spiritual objects, the Universal, the Eternal, and the Necessary, as the eye bears to material and contingent phaenomena. But then it must be added, that it is an organ identical with its appropriate objects. Thus, God, the Soul, eternal Truth, etc., are the objects of Reason; but they are themselves *reason* [...]; in this sense it [i.e. Reason] may be safely defined the organ of the Super-sensuous” (*The Friend*, in Coleridge, *Collected Works*, IV, 1, pp. 155–156). A similar position is expressed by Hamilton: “I now enter upon the last of the Cognitive Faculties, – the faculty which I denominated the Regulative [...], the power the mind has of being the native source of certain necessary or *a priori* cognitions [...]. The Regulative Faculty is [...] the *locus principiorum*. It thus corresponds to what was known in the Greek philosophy under the name of *noûs*, when that term was rigorously used. To this faculty has been latterly applied the name of *Reason*, but this term is so vague and ambiguous, that it is almost unfitted to convey any definite meaning. The term *Common Sense* has likewise been applied to designate the place of principles. This word is also ambiguous [...] I may notice that Pascal and Hemsterhuis have applied *Intuition* and *Sentiment* in this sense; and Jacobi originally employed *Glaube* (*Belief* or *Faith*) in the same way, though he latterly superseded this expression by that of *Vernunft* (*Reason*)” (Hamilton, *Lectures*, vol. II, pp. 347–349).

⁵⁷ Cf. above, note 6.

⁵⁸ In September 1815, he wrote to John May: “[...] This work will be entitled *Logosophia*: or on the *Logos*, divine and human, in six Treatises. The first, or preliminary treatise contains a philosophical History of Philosophy and its revolutions from Pythagoras to Plato and to Aristotle – from Aristotle to Lord Bacon, including the scholastic metaphysicians of what are called the dark ages – from Bacon to Des Cartes and Locke – and from Locke to the revival of the eldest Philosophy, which I call *dynamic* or constructive as opposed to the material and mechanical systems still predominant” (*Collected Letters of S.T. Coleridge*, ed. by E.L. Griggs, Oxford, 1956–1971, vol. IV, p. 589).

⁵⁹ Cf. On Coleridge’s efforts to make sure that his lectures were regularly publicised every Saturday in London newspapers see: Coleridge, *Lectures 1818–1819*, pp. xxxv–xl. In a report of the first lecture we read: “The Lecture of Monday [Dec., 14, 1818], if it did not satisfy us on all the doctrinal points involved, furnished much curious information, and suggested many important reflections. It was rich in materials for serious meditation: food for the mind-matter of deliberate digestion; and we know not where so much information, upon subject so erudite and abstract, could have been so easily, or so agreeably obtained. The company [the audience] was numerous and respectable” (*Champion*, no. 311, Dec. 20, 1818, p. 809 [*Lectures 1818–1819*, p. 45]).

though this never took place.⁶⁰ In order to prepare these lectures adequately, Coleridge requested and received from Germany Tennemann's *Geschichte der Philosophie*, the tenth volume of which had just appeared.⁶¹

For Coleridge, philosophy – historically considered – should be viewed as a harmonious process orientated in a finalistic direction, connected to all the other aspects of man's life and related to institutions and social, political, and religious ideas, as well as to economic conditions and to the state of the sciences and the arts.⁶² Coleridge believes that philosophers are all either Platonists or Aristotelians: "Philosophy - he proclaimed in the last of his London lectures - seemed to fall into two great domains, and there to rest – those who grounded all hope of knowledge on observation, and the power of generalizing and classifying, arranged themselves under Aristotle – while those who remained faithful to the principles of Pythagoras, who sought for the only true science, and in it for Power and Prophecy in Laws, and Laws in the Ideas revealed thro' the pure Reason, marshalled under Plato".⁶³ This is

⁶⁰The manuscript, published for the first time in 1949 by Kathleen Coburn, is now available in a critical edition (*Lectures 1818–1819. On the History of Philosophy*, ed. by J.R. de Jackson, in Coleridge, *Collected Works*, VIII). The text is interesting, but the character of these lessons (fourteen lectures covering the whole historical development of philosophy) and the heterogeneity of the public did not allow any in-depth analysis. The intention of publishing these lectures is confirmed by a letter written to Robert Southey on 31st January 1819: "[...] first, because a History of Philosophy [...] is a desideratum in Literature – and secondly, because it is almost a necessary Introduction to my *magnum opus*" (*Collected Letters*, IV, p. 917); on this series of lectures, cf. J. Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge* (London, 2009), in particular pp. 93–124.

⁶¹Tennemann's volumes (preserved in the British Museum) contain numerous notes written in the margins or on the flyleaves, which have recently been published (Coleridge, *Collected Works*, XII: *Marginalia*, V, pp. 691–816).

⁶²In the *Prospectus*, where he announced the series of London lectures, Coleridge declared: "[...] a work like the present, in which the accidental influences of particular periods and individual genius are by no means overlooked, but which yet does in the main consider Philosophy historically, as an essential part of the history of man, and as if it were the striving of a single mind, under very different circumstances indeed, and at different periods of its own growth and development; but so that each change and every new direction should have its cause and its explanation in the errors, insufficiency, or prematurity of the preceding, while all by reference to a common object is reduced to harmony of impression and total result" (*Prospectus*, in Coleridge, *Lectures 1818–1819*, p. 5).

⁶³*Ibid.*, pp. 608–609. The same theory is also present in one of the initial lessons: "He [i.e. Pythagoras] began that position, the carrying on of which by Plato and the division or schism from which by Aristotle constituted the two classes of philosophers or rather of philosophy which remain to this day, and if we were to live a thousand or ten thousand years ever would remain, for in this it consists" (*Ibid.* p. 75). In a marginal note to Tennemann, *Geschichte*, VIII, p. 130, we find the following passage: "Divide Mankind into two very disproportionate parts, the Few who have and who have cultivated, the faculty of thinking *speculatively*, i.e. by reduction to Principles, and the Many who either from original defect or deficiency, or from want of cultivation, do not, in this sense, think at all: and you may then, according to my belief, subdivide the former Class, the illustrious Minority, into two Species, scarcely less disproportionate in the comparative number of Individuals contained in each, viz. the *born* Conceptionists, the spiritual Children of Aristotle, and the *born* Ideists [i.e. Idealists] or Ideatae, the spiritual Children of Plato" (Coleridge, *Marginalia*, vol. V, p. 770). The division of philosophers into "Platonic sheep" and "Aristotelian goats" also appears in the published works (see in particular *Table Talk*, in Coleridge, *Collected Works*, XIV, 1, pp. 172–174; see also the letter to James Gooden dated 14th January 1820, in *Collected Letters*, vol. V, pp. 13–15).

a suggestion that reappears several times in his writings and is perhaps drawn from Goethe's *Farbenlehre*, which he read towards the end of 1817.⁶⁴ Plato is the philosopher-poet, whose doctrine of ideas has been and continues to be a creative power over the centuries and the foundation of the reconciliation between reason and religion; Aristotle is the father of the inductive method, the philosopher-scientist, the inventor of logic, the speculative source to which materialism, empiricism, sensationalism, associationist psychology, and utilitarian ethics can be traced back.

Coleridge also associates the opposition between Platonists and Aristotelians with the antithesis between the constitutive and the regulative.⁶⁵ He often proceeds by comparing and contrasting the ancients and the moderns: empiricism (Anaxagoras and Locke), materialism (Democritus and Hobbes), pantheism (Plotinus, but especially Proclus, and Schelling), subjective idealism (Antisthenes and Berkeley), scepticism (Pyrrho and Hume).⁶⁶ Pre-Socratic philosophy is important, except for Thales who is not a philosopher but a physicist; Pythagoras is the first philosopher, a Platonist before Plato. In opposition to a well-established historiographical tradition, from Brucker to Tennemann, Coleridge appreciates Neoplatonism, in particular Plotinus, even though he criticises the pantheistic and irrationalistic aspects contained in his works because they are incompatible with the Christian religion. He appreciates Scholastic philosophy, and has direct knowledge of some works, in particular those of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus; but he knows Ockham as well; he also appreciates the logic of the Scholastics, the clarification of language,

⁶⁴J.W. Goethe, *Zur Farbenlehre*, ed. by M. Wenzel, in Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 23/1 (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), pp. 618–619: “Plato verhält sich zu der Welt, wie ein seliger Geist, dem es beliebt, einige Zeit auf ihr zu herbergen. [...] Aristoteles hingegen steht zu der Welt wie ein Mann, ein baumeisterlicher. [...] Wenn ein Paar solcher Männer, die sich gewissermaßen in die Menschheit teilten, als getrennte Repräsentanten herrlicher nicht leicht zu vereinender Eigenschaften auftraten; [...] so folgt natürlich, daß die Welt, insofern sie als empfindend und denkend anzusehen ist, genötigt war, sich einem oder dem andern hinzugeben, einen oder den andern, als Meister, Lehrer, Führer anzuerkennen”.

⁶⁵“Whether Ideas are regulative only, according to Aristotle and Kant, or likewise constitutive, and one with the power and Life of Nature according to Plato and Plotinus [...] is the highest *problem* of Philosophy, and not part of its nomenclature” (*Statesman's Manual*, in Coleridge, *Collected Works*, VI, p. 114); see also the annotations written in the margins of Tennemann, I, p. 107 (*Marginalia*, vol. 5, p. 698): “[...] a profounder [than that of Tennemann] View would have delighted in observing, at how early a period the great fundamental Question of all Philosophy was started, & divided men according to the solution into the two genera generalissima [i.e. most general genera] of Philosophizing, even unto this day. As Aristotle: Plato = Kant: Schelling”.

⁶⁶“[...] The Locke of Antiquity, Anaxagoras” (Coleridge, *Lectures 1818–1819*, p. 152; see also *ibid.*, pp. 198 and 673); “I should find him [i.e. Schelling] in the writings of Plotinus and still more of Proclus” (*ibid.*, p. 588); see also the letter to J.H. Green dated 29th September 1818, Coleridge, *Collected Letters*, IV, pp. 873–876; on the parallelism between Pyrrho and Hume, see *Id.*, *Lectures 1818–1819*, pp. 258–259.

the effort to rationalize faith.⁶⁷ As for British philosophy, he identifies a line of development that extends from Bacon, whom he interprets from a Platonic perspective, to the English Neoplatonists and to Berkeley, up to himself, in opposition to the materialistic orientation of English empiricism, which, in his view, represents rather an incidental deviation in the history of British culture.⁶⁸

A work that follows in Coleridge's footsteps is the history of philosophy by Frederick Denison Maurice, an Anglican theologian who manifested, at least in part, a leaning towards the open-minded positions of the so-called 'Broad Church' and was an outstanding exponent of Christian socialism; he was active as a teacher in London, initially at King's College and then at Queen's College, and finally, from 1866 onwards, as a professor of philosophy and moral theology at Cambridge.⁶⁹ This work originated as an article for the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana* and was

⁶⁷ On medieval philosophy, see the account in Coleridge, *Lectures 1818–1819*, pp. 373–395, 402–414, 422, and 498. While he admits some mistakes and excesses, Coleridge acknowledges that “the object [of Scholastic philosophy] was to prove that what faith and the Church had declared to be true was coincident with reason and therefore that truths already known were rational truths. [...] The mode in which they put it was naturally, first of all, by bringing together the opinions of wise men on such and such subjects; but yet so many and so discordant were the doctrines to be proved that nothing could be effected but by fine distinctions”; the means for attaining this end was philosophy understood as a tool for clarifying language: “The next step was [...] philosophy that employed itself in desynonymising words, in giving them sometimes perfectly just and distinct meanings, often but apparent ones, but which, whether true or false, laid the foundation of our modern languages” (pp. 386–387).

⁶⁸ This theory has been taken up in more recent times by an epigone of Coleridge's Platonizing idealism, John Henry Muirhead (1855–1940), who identifies a certain unilateralism in the usual image of British idealism as the result of foreign influence which represented an abrupt and external interruption to the traditional empiricist orientation characterising British philosophy; according to Muirhead, the ideas from Germany found a terrain that had already been prepared by an autochthonous idealistic tradition traceable to Scotus Eriugena and had been picked up vigorously by the Cambridge Platonists, reaching – through the Berkeley and other eighteenth-century English thinkers, and then, during the nineteenth century, through Coleridge, Carlyle, Ferrier, and Jowett – his contemporaries, whereas he believed that naturalism and sensationalism, which resulted, rather, from Cartesian mechanism, were foreign to the English tradition (Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy. Studies in the History of Idealism in England and America*, London, 1931, pp. 13–16 and *passim*).

⁶⁹ On Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–1872) cf. *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice, chiefly told in his own letters*, ed. by his son F. Maurice, 2nd ed. (London, 1884); S. Schroeder, ‘Maurice, Frederick Denison’, in DNCBPh, pp. 766–770; C.R. Sanders, ‘Maurice as a Commentator on Coleridge’, *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, LIII (1938), pp. 230–245; A. Gerolin, *Coscienza dell'ordine e ordine della coscienza. Il pensiero di Frederick Denison Maurice* (Milano, 2010) [bibliography, pp. 301–319].

published in the form of a booklet in 1840.⁷⁰ Subsequently, the text was greatly enlarged and published in four volumes devoted to ancient, late ancient, medieval, and modern thought, respectively⁷¹; the variations chiefly concern the description of late ancient and medieval thought, whereas, as regards the history of ancient and modern philosophy, the text appears considerably expanded, but the general approach, the method, and the historiographical theses hardly change.

Instead of requiring a theoretical essay, as in the case of all the other ‘pure sciences’, for the article ‘metaphysics’, the editor of the encyclopaedia, Hugh James Rose commissioned Maurice to write a historical essay: “In the present state of metaphysical knowledge”, he wrote in the general preface to the work, “it would be presumptuous to put forth any system of Metaphysics, but a general History of Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy affords the most convenient opportunity for displaying the principles on which the greatest philosophers have hitherto endeavoured to form their systems, for pointing out their difficulties, and for marking how far each has contributed to the progress of the science”.⁷² The reasons expressed by Rose were fully shared by Maurice, who some years later reiterated them in the

⁷⁰The *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana* adopted the ‘methodical’ principle of the French *Encyclopédie Méthodique* (see *Models*, III, pp. 35–42) while intensifying some of its features; here the material was spread over four sections, as against the 48 sections of the French model; the first two sections were devoted to pure and applied sciences, each discipline was treated separately and each treatment corresponded to a monograph written by an expert; the third section gathered together the historical and biographical material, which was also presented in monographs arranged in chronological order; only the fourth section, devoted to lexicons, was structured alphabetically. The *Encyclopaedia* fulfilled in some measure a project which had been conceived by Coleridge, who wrote an introductory essay published in January 1818 in a text which, however, was heavily reworked and changed by the publisher (on this complicated matter, cf. A.D. Snyder, ‘Introduction’ to S.T. Coleridge, *Treatise on Method, as published in the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, London, 1934, pp. vii–xxviii). The project of the *Encyclopaedia*, which had started with much difficulty, changed its orientation several times during its execution and was only brought to an end in 1845. Maurice’s historical essay, entitled *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, was completed in April 1840; the article was immediately published and then included in the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana; or Universal Dictionary of Knowledge [...]* (London, 1845), vol. II, pp. 545–674; on the date of composition of this essay, cf. *The Life of F.D. Maurice*, I, p. 280. A considerable part of the material of the encyclopaedia was recovered and republished in separate volumes by new publishers, who considered the encyclopaedia “as a mere quarry of valuable material” (T. Watts, ‘The English Cyclopaedias’, *Quarterly Review*, CXIII, no. 226, Apr. 1863, p. 379); Maurice’s essay, together with Coleridge’s treatise on method and with the essays on logic, rhetoric, law, and theology, were reprinted unchanged in *Encyclopaedia of Mental Philosophy* (London: J.J. Griffith and Co., 1847), 2 vols.

⁷¹F.D. Maurice, *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, Part I: *Ancient Philosophy* (London: John Joseph Griffin and Co., 1850 [1861⁴]), pp. vii–xi, 237; Id., *Philosophy of the First Six Centuries* (London and Glasgow: Richard Griffin and Co., 1854), pp. v–viii, 157; Id., *Mediaeval Philosophy; or, a Treatise of Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century* (London and Glasgow: Richard Griffin and Co., 1857, [1859², 1870]), pp. v–xi, 253; Id., *Modern Philosophy; or, a Treatise of Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy from the Fourteenth Century to the French Revolution, with a Glimpse into the Nineteenth Century* (London: Griffin, Bohn, and Co., 1862), pp. vii–xvii, 676. The whole work was later published in two volumes (*Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, new edition with a new preface [pp. xiii–xlii] in the form of a dialogue between the author and an undergraduate, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1872; subsequent reprints: 1873, 1882, 1890).

⁷²H.J. Rose, ‘Preface’ to the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, vol. I, p. xvii.

preface to the first volume⁷³; here he also illustrated very clearly the purposes of his work: to provide students with all the information which might help them in examining the objectives of the most outstanding writers, in reading their texts, and in situating them in the context and the age in which they lived.⁷⁴ In the preface to the fourth volume, he explained even more explicitly: “I have not aspired to give an account of systems and schools. That task, it seems to me, has been accomplished already as well as it can be accomplished. At all events, I could add nothing to the labours of previous writers. For I take no interest in the subject; I should have wearied myself and my readers equally if I had endeavoured to pursue it. But to trace the progress of the thoughts that have contributed to form these schools and systems; to connect them with the lives of the men in whom they have originated; to note the influence which they have exerted upon their times, and the influence which their times have exerted upon them; this I take to be an altogether different task”.⁷⁵ According to Maurice, the study of the past requires the historian to be able to place himself empathetically in the past, “to live as much as possible with those who were living in it”, not to anticipate theories and doctrines of subsequent ages: in this way, we can derive lessons for ourselves from the past, and we can grasp, for example, the current relevance and vitality of some questions which were raised in the ancient world, in the first Christian age, or in the Middle Ages, and which in the eighteenth century were supposed to have become extinct, devoid of value and meaning, and whose importance for the layman, even more than for the professional philosopher, has been rediscovered in this century.⁷⁶

⁷³ “Mr. Rose expressed his wish, that the form of the treatise should be historical and not didactic. [...] The reasons which Mr. Rose gave for objecting to a dogmatical treatise seemed to me very weighty” (Maurice, *Ancient Philosophy*, p. vii).

⁷⁴ “I believed that I should be acting in conformity with the wishes of the [...] Editor, who had, I knew, a very hearty dislike to mere historical abridgments, if, leaving the student to seek for a formal and regular account of systems in the many French or German works which profess to furnish one, I contented myself with offering him a few hints which might help him in examining the purpose of the most conspicuous teachers; in reading their books, when they had left any; in connecting them with the country or the age wherein they flourished” (Maurice, *Ancient Philosophy*, p. vii).

⁷⁵ Maurice, *Modern Philosophy*, pp. vii–viii; see also Id., *Philosophy of the First Six Centuries*, pp. v–vi.

⁷⁶ “In the study of any past time I have endeavoured to place myself in that time – to live as much as possible with those who were living in it – not to anticipate what might be the interests and engagements of the subsequent age – not to impute to any the habits and opinions of our own. So far I have been able to do this I have become more aware of the permanence of all great principles and questions; more convinced that only the accidents of them can ever become obsolete; more earnest to derive lessons for ourselves from the experience of our forefathers [...]. The questions which interested the ancient world, the first Christian age, the Middle Age, and which were supposed in the eighteenth century to have become extinct and worthless, are those which have most forced themselves upon the attention of the nineteenth century; which we cannot escape from if we wish it ever so much; which work themselves into our practical life; for which the man demands a solution even more than the professional philosopher” (Maurice, *Modern Philosophy*, p. viii); cf. also Id., *Ancient Philosophy*, p. 3: “[...] not a history of opinions and systems, but of investigations. [...] To trace the thoughts which were working in the minds of those who founded Schools, to discover how they were affected by their characters, teachers, disciples, opponents, personal and political conflicts, to watch the processes by which they were expanded, completed, narrowed, is a far more interesting work, and one which falls far more properly within the province of the historian of philosophy”.

Maurice traces the history of the “metaphysical” and the “moral” part of philosophy: the former has as its object the “mind” and comprises the theory of knowledge, anthropology, and psychology, as well as theology; the latter has as its object relations between individuals and peoples and comprises ethics and politics; the treatment does not include “physical philosophy”, or natural philosophy, that is to say, the science of nature.⁷⁷ Maurice’s reflects the religious orthodoxy of the Anglican tradition. He himself declares explicitly that the perspective from which he considers the past of philosophy is that of theology and of the religious tradition: “it will be evidente to the reader of any part of these volumes that I have felt as a theologian, thought as a theologian, written as a theologian; that all other subjects in my mind are connected with theology, and subordinated to it. I use the word in its old sense. I mean by theology that which concerns the Being and Nature of God. I mean the revelation of God to men, not any pious or religious sentiments which men may have respecting God”.⁷⁸ Having this “prepossession”, it might seem impossible to “speak fairly” of the great philosophers of the modern age, from Bruno to Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, and Lessing; Maurice is aware that this objection may be raised and, above all, that he is exposed to real danger in this regard; and yet, he declares with a certain naivety that the possible partiality and errors are to be attributed not so much to his religious “prepossession” – which is in itself nothing but love of truth, and therefore also of that part of truth which is present in everyone – as to the limitations of his theology, namely, to the human poverty of his religiousness, which constitutes the only true limitation to his love of truth.⁷⁹

As for his fundamental positions, his general orientation is that of Coleridge. The philosophers of all ages are divided into Platonists and Aristotelians; but the “living philosophy”, that which consoles Boethius in prison, coincides with Platonism, in which philosophising means rising up to the knowledge of the intelligible, whereas, according to Aristotelianism, it is a mere empirical classification of the sensible; according to Plato, theoretical reason goes beyond experience and reaches the intelligible world of pure ideas, but then it is practical reason, morality, that guarantees

⁷⁷ Cf. Maurice, *Encyclopaedia*, II, p. 545; Id., *Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 1–2.

⁷⁸ Maurice, *Modern Philosophy*, p. ix; see also *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy* [1872], vol. I, pp. XIII–XLII.

⁷⁹ “A writer with this temper of mind, it may be thought, may not be unjust to the first thirteen centuries after the Christian era. Most philosophers were then, in some sense or other, theologians; possibly those may understand them best who despise them least. But how, having this prepossession [...] can I speak fairly of Giordano Bruno, Thomas Hobbes, Benedict Spinoza, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Gothold Ephraim Lessing? Whether I have spoken fairly of them I must leave others to judge. If I have not, [...] I at once declare that not my theology, but the atheism which fights in me against my theology, is answerable for that wrong. So far as I confess the God who is revealed in Christ I dare not misrepresent any one; I dare not refuse to see the good, and the struggle after good, which is in him; I dare not pass judgment upon him. [...] In a thousand instances the reader may discover that I have failed of the standard which I thus set before me. He may think often that I have committed that which I confess to be sin in the sight of God. Still I trust that what I have written may help him to set that standard before himself; to keep it more stedfastly in sight than I have done; to repent whenever he departs from it; to be sure that no other will be found safe in the last day” (Maurice, *Modern Philosophy*, pp. ix–x).

this world with an objective reality; in Plato, “dialectics and ethics are inseparable”; by contrast, in Aristotle, philosophy is logic applied to the physical world, and the metaphysical world is “the mere complement of a system which could exist without [it]”.⁸⁰

The strong presence of a theological and religious inspiration is also evident from the subdivision of the subject matter, both in the shorter version intended for the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana* and, above all, in the subsequent and more extensive edition in four volumes. In both versions, Maurice starts with Jewish moral and political doctrines: as for the Jewish people, it is not possible to speak of metaphysics yet, but only of moral and civil education and political institutions, which, however, are not the outcome of human efforts, but rather of the direct revelation of a “Divine Instructor”.⁸¹ The longer edition also comprises some chapters devoted, respectively, to Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, and Persian philosophy, whose profound religious inspiration Maurice points out, and, as regards Hinduism, its possible links with Greek speculation.⁸²

Ancient philosophy largely coincides with Greek philosophy, and here Maurice begins with Thales and concludes with the Alexandrian school of Philo Judaeus, with whom, he believes, there was the first, albeit partial and absolutely insufficient, contact between Jewish culture and Greek philosophy. On the one hand, the Jewish Scriptures enable Philo “to connect the absolute being with personality” – which in Plato’s mind was “a wish and a kind of moral necessity”; on the other hand, “with all his advantages”, Philo was “a less true man, and therefore a less safe guide” than Plato, “his Grecian master”; the real cause of Philo’s disposition to allegorize consists in his inability to understand and accept the ‘letter’ and the ‘historical’ contents of the Scriptures: “he cannot see God working in the actual affairs of earth, and therefore [...] he must separate essences from forms, till the first become vapours

⁸⁰ On the world of ideas, which Maurice interprets, from an Augustinian perspective, as the content of the divine mind, and on the connection between dialectic (or metaphysics) and ethics in Plato, cf. Maurice, *Encyclopaedia*, II, pp. 590–592, 603. On the different role and weight attributed to theology in the Platonic system and in the Aristotelian system, Maurice writes: “We think it cannot be denied that the recognition of an absolute being, of an absolute good, was that which gave life to the whole doctrine of Plato, and without which it is unmeaning; that on the contrary, it is merely the crowning result, or at least, the necessary postulate of Aristotle’s Philosophy. In strict consistency with this difference, it was a Being to satisfy the wants of man which Plato sighed for; it was a first cause of things to which Aristotle did homage” (*ibid.*, p. 616). On the opposition between Platonism and Aristotelianism, see also the following passage: “They [the Platonic school] were students of the infinite. [...] They were [...] primarily theological. Hence, if they did not accept Christianity, they must come into a direct polemic with it. The Aristotelian laid down his data on Logic, applied these to the physical universe, admitted a metaphysical world beyond that, believed in a certain divine region which the theoretic man might behold and dwell in. But these last were the mere complements of a system which could exist without them, unless some great moral necessity, which neither Aristotle nor Porphyry, nor for a long time Boethius, seems to have felt, should force them first into the thoughts of ordinary men, and thence into the schools” (Id., *Mediaeval Philosophy*, p. 16).

⁸¹ Cf. Maurice, *Encyclopaedia*, II, pp. 545–67; Id., *Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 5–28.

⁸² Cf. Maurice, *Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 29–74.

and the second husks”; the new faith, “fulfilment” of the “vision” of the Scriptures and of the profound “aspiration” of the Platonic philosophy itself, “through another entrance than that of Alexandrian wisdom [...] was to find its way into the hearts of men, because it was [...] a faith for men, and not for those who sought to separate themselves from men”; Maurice always vigorously stresses the historical character of Christian annunciation, which is linked to events, “facts”, such as the birth and organisation of the first Christian communities, that is, the “fact” of the Church, rather than to doctrines or philosophical systems.⁸³ As in many other cases, here too Maurice’s underlying mysticism and his Platonism, or rather Neoplatonism, find a clear limit and a corrective in his deep-rooted conviction that there is a need for a historical element in theology.

The philosophy of the first six centuries of the Christian era is treated in depth by Maurice, especially in the longer edition, where the text is “entirely rewritten”

⁸³ “[...] We believe it was given to Philo to bring out into clearness, by help of the Jewish Scriptures, some principles of the Platonic philosophy which Plato himself could but partially apprehend. That which was a wish in Plato’s mind – a wish and a kind of moral necessity – to connect the absolute being [...] with personality, was involved in the very principles of the Jew’s mind. [...] But on what ground do we affirm that with all his advantages he [i.e. Philo] was a less true man, and therefore a less safe guide, than his Grecian master? The apparent contradiction may be explained in this way: Plato, we have seen, in all his loftiest discourses respecting the dignity of the philosopher [...] never loses altogether sight of the truth that the philosopher is not of another race from his fellows-creatures, but only the one who is seeking to realize the humanity which belongs to all [...]. Now this feeling ought surely to have been far more present to the mind of Philo. Every thing in the records which had been familiar to him from his childhood, should have taught him that his privilege was to belong to a race. [...] Of this Philo seems to have had but very indistinct glimpses. [...] Hence results, we believe, that feeling of displeasure, and even disgust, with which honest minds turn away from Philo’s commentaries upon the characters of the Old Testament. For this is the real cause of his disposition to allegorize. He cannot endure any thing so vulgar as sheep and oxen, as men fighting battles with actual swords and spears. He cannot see a meaning in these things, and therefore he must find a meaning for them. He cannot see God working in the actual affairs of earth, and therefore instead of seeing any thing as it is glorified and translated into the signification of something higher, he must separate essences from forms, till the first become vapours and the second husks. [...] Nothing could have been such a shock to the disciples of the Alexandrian school, as the announcement that a peasant of Galilee was He whom, in so many mysterious passages of their nation’s records, they had been tracing as the source and spring of all the light which had been in the hearts of faithful men in the chosen nation, or even which had diffused itself through the world. [...] The Alexandrian [...] will hardly have ventured to ask himself, even for a moment, whether any one Old Testament vision, whether any one Platonical aspiration, could have had its fulfilment unless the absolute Being revealed himself to his creatures in the likeness of a man, [...] unless the Word could take flesh and dwell among men. [...] Through another entrance than that of Alexandrian wisdom, this faith was to find its way into the hearts of men, because it was emphatically a faith for men, and not for those who sought to separate themselves from men. In spite of that wisdom, and of all other powers and influences, it did establish itself in the world. The Christian church has become a fact which may be reasoned about as we will, but which remains a fact still. Whoso overlooks it in a record of philosophical inquiries, proclaims thereby that they have no connection with humanity; obliges himself to treat the deepest and most earnest speculations of men in the ancient world as dreams of which there is no interpretation, and leaves himself without a clue with which to trace the progress of thought in modern Europe” (Maurice, *Encyclopaedia*, II, pp. 630–631; see also Id., *Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 234–237).

compared with the article previously written for the *Encyclopaedia*,⁸⁴ and it now takes up a whole volume. In the history of philosophy, late ancient philosophy represents an epoch which, according to Maurice, has its own features and its particular unity, which make it different both from ancient and from medieval philosophy: the unification of the Mediterranean area under the rule of Rome; the coexistence of elements deriving from Eastern and Western, Greek and Latin, pagan, Hebrew and Christian philosophical and sapiential traditions, interacting with one another and exercising reciprocal influences; the birth and spread of the Church as an institution; the definition of the dogmatic contents of the Christian faith, attained through the heretical conflicts; and a specific element which was present in all the philosophical schools of that age, which “aimed at some one object or principle: the pursuit of Unity, or the One, became formally and consciously with some, really with all, the absorbing pursuit”.⁸⁵ The treatment is subdivided into centuries, and the authors of a century are presented according to a rigorous chronological sequence, and pagan and Christian thinkers are placed side by side within the framework of the political, social, and religious events of the period. The account begins with Seneca, Epictetus, the Hebrew sects, and the emerging Church; ample space is devoted to four authors: Clement and Plotinus, Augustine and Proclus⁸⁶; and the description ends with the two parallel figures of Justinian in the East and Pope Gregory the Great in the West, with whom the late ancient world falls into a decline and the medieval age begins. Justinian and Gregory, “two unphilosophical names [...]”; perhaps we may have more to say of these than of many who have founded schools and composed systems. They are both of them far more memorable for what they did by themselves,

⁸⁴ Cf. Maurice, *Philosophy of the First Six Centuries*, p. v.

⁸⁵ Maurice, *Philosophy of the First Six Centuries*, p. 1; on the aspects characterising the late ancient epoch, see *ibid.*, pp. 1–4. Maurice does not admit, at least as concerns philosophy, that it is possible to consider the fall of the Western Empire as the event that corresponds to the end of the ancient world: at the beginning of the Christian era “we [...] find a set of new actors”, who concerned themselves with problems certainly related to those which had been addressed until then, “but in many important respects different from them. A new element [...] has been infused into the minds of Pagans and Jews, as well as of Christians” (Maurice, *Ancient Philosophy*, p. 237).

⁸⁶ They all share a connection with the tradition of Platonism: Clement avoided the materialism of the Ionians by discovering Plato (Maurice, *Philosophy of the First Six Centuries*, pp. 44–54); among the Neoplatonists, Plotinus was he who could be reconciled the most with the Christian religion (*ibid.*, pp. 54–68); Iamblichus, with whom “Platonism [became] mythological” (*ibid.*, pp. 71–82); Augustine recovered the truths of Platonism from a Christian point of view (*ibid.*, pp. 96–115); Proclus, with whom Neoplatonism faded into mere abstractions (*ibid.*, pp. 115–138).

or through others, than for what they thought; yet they have both, consciously or unconsciously, affected speculation as much as action".⁸⁷

The description of medieval philosophy is also considerably enlarged in the edition published as a volume, compared with the limited number of pages devoted to it in the article written for the *Encyclopaedia*.⁸⁸ In the longer edition the treatment starts with a step backwards, that is to say, with a long chapter devoted to Boethius, who had already been briefly examined in the previous volume.⁸⁹ This is justified by the fact that, for Maurice, the figure of Boethius condenses and embodies the contradictions and, so to speak, the light and the shade of the medieval age; Boethius represents the transition between the East and the West, between the ancient and late ancient world on one hand and, on the other, the new world which was dawning in the West⁹⁰; we owe him the medieval classification of the sciences and especially "that deification of Logic [...] which was to produce far more startling and serious results in his disciples of the later world", thus bringing about, on the one hand, "imprisonments in formalities" but also "the outlines of an education" which was to mould modern Europe⁹¹; on a philosophical plane, if we consider his works of logic and his treatise on arithmetics, Boethius is "the sturdiest of Aristotelians", and yet

⁸⁷ Maurice, *Philosophy of the First Six Centuries*, p. 139. Maurice's judgement on Justinian is extremely negative: he submitted himself to papal authority; in Africa he exterminated the Arian Vandals and in Italy the Ostrogoths, who were Arian too, but the "victories of the Trinitarian over the Arian faith" represented the triumph of an enforced orthodoxy rather than of a faith: "the Trinity with him was not a belief, but an opinion. Men were to hold right opinions upon it and upon other subjects. If they did not, they were to be coerced. But, like everything else in Justinian's mind, this doctrine belonged to the region of decrees"; and in Africa "the victory of the Cross, as it appeared to that generation, prepared the way for the triumph of the Crescent a little more than a century afterwards", which was to bring about the dissolution of the unity of the Mediterranean area; with the closure of the school of Athens, with the banishment of the Neoplatonic philosophers, but also with the abolition of the consulate, only the "symbols" of the greatness of Rome in politics and of Greece in the domain of thought were swept away, "the reality of them having long disappeared" (*ibid.*, pp. 140–148). More positive was his judgement on Gregory the Great: he was no man of letters but, nevertheless, was "a great instrument in promoting education"; a man of faith, not of doctrine; imbued with missionary zeal, an organiser of forms of cult for the whole Christian West, he created the preconditions of the process of secularisation of the Church which characterised the European Middle Ages (*ibid.*, pp. 148–157).

⁸⁸ Cf. Maurice, *Encyclopaedia*, II, pp. 639–647.

⁸⁹ Maurice, *Mediaeval Philosophy*, pp. 1–28; cf. Id., *Philosophy of the First Six Centuries*, pp. 138–139; on the contrary, Boethius' name is not present in the article written for the *Encyclopaedia*.

⁹⁰ Maurice, *Mediaeval Philosophy*, p. 28.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8. Here Maurice takes up some theses which had already been formulated by Coleridge (cf. above, note 67), by Hamilton, who also expresses his appreciation for the contribution made by the Scholastics to the clarification of language ("[...] to the schoolmen the vulgar languages are principally indebted for what precision and analytic subtilty they possess", Hamilton, *Discussions*, p. 5, note), and by John Stuart Mill, whose admiration for the logic of the Scholastics is well-known (cf. Mill, *A System of Logic*, in *Collected Works*, vol. VII, p. 29, and vol. VIII, p. 1013).

“in his prison hours”, in his *De consolatione philosophiae*, he “has begun [...] to speak the language of a Platonist, as if it were his native dialect”.⁹²

The description of medieval philosophy continues in a chronological order, with long paragraphs preliminary to the different chapters on the political and religious events of the corresponding centuries. Maurice concentrates his attention on various philosophers who are somehow raised to the role of representatives of their centuries: Johannes Scotus Eriugena, Anselm, Abelard, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas; less space is given to other authors, such as Hugh of St Victor, Peter Lombard, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, or Raymond Lull. The treatment closes with the latter and with an important reference to the figure of Dante Alighieri, “the poet of Florence and of Italy”, “earnest theologian” and “patriot”; Lull and Dante are considered by Maurice to be the symbols of the great changes which were occurring, or at least brewing, in European society: science and philosophy which, in Lull’s project, replace the crusade against Islam; the crisis of the Papacy, the aspiration to Church reform, which are symbolised by the events experienced by Lull and Dante; the birth of national literatures and, at the same time, of new societies and new national powers; the new value accorded to individuality: all this is for Maurice an indication that the fourteenth century is “a better epoch from which to commence the new age of European thought” than – as it was customary especially among the historians of a Protestant tendency – the German Reformation of the sixteenth century.⁹³

The account of modern thought starts with Ockham, whose modernity, with respect to medieval tradition, consists not so much in nominalism and in a sort of epistemological scepticism, which Maurice does not approve of, as in a clear

⁹² Maurice, *Mediaeval Philosophy*, pp. 25–26.

⁹³ “[...] And now came forth our Lully, to avouch that a divine art [...] will conquer the Saracens better than the hosts of the West. It is a great change – the sign that other changes have taken place – or are at hand. [...] There was another far grander spirit than Raymond’s which was passing at the same time through a very similar crisis. Dante Alighieri was changed from a Guelph into a Ghibelline. Dante Alighieri, the most earnest Theologian of his time, found the persecuted Manfred in Purgatory, and some Popes in one of the hopeless circles of the world below. Yet no one more thoroughly honoured the founders of the Mendicant Orders. The Dominican Aquinas in the Paradiso, celebrates the praises of St. Francis. He himself proved his claim to be the Angelic Doctor by untying, there as here, the most complicated knots of the intellect. But the poet who listened with delight to these solutions is the poet of Florence and of Italy; the transcendental Metaphysician never for an instant forgets the sorrows of the actual world in which he is living; the student sustains the patriot. Drenched in the school lore, it is still the vulgar eloquence – the speech of the people that is dear to him. Virgil is his Master, because Virgil was a Mantuan, and sang of Italy. And neither Theology, Politics, nor the study of ancient Song, crushes the life of the individual man. Fervent human love was the commencement to the poet of a new life. [...] Wise men of our own day have said that Dante embodies the spirit of the Mediaeval time, and is a prophet of the time which followed. We testify our assent to that remark by accepting his poem, coeval as it is with the great judgment of the Papacy under Boniface, with the practical termination of the religious wars [between the Christians and the Saracens, i.e. the Crusades] and with the rise of a native literature, not only in the South but in the North – as a better epoch from which to commence the new age of European thought, than the German Reformation of the sixteenth century” (Maurice, *Mediaeval Philosophy*, pp. 251–253; see also Id., *Encyclopaedia*, II, pp. 646–647).

separation between logic and theology, and, above all, in a radical criticism of the secularisation of the Church.⁹⁴

As for the part devoted to modern thought, both in the shorter version written for the *Encyclopaedia* and in the much longer version published as a volume over 20 years later, the material is structured according to the usual rigidly chronological criteria; in this case, a chapter covers half a century. The philosophers who are granted most space are Hobbes and Spinoza; a little less is reserved for Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant. The section closes with European philosophy on the threshold of the nineteenth century, namely with the figures of Voltaire, Condillac, and Rousseau for France, Hume, Burke, Paley, and Bentham for Great Britain, Lessing, Kant, Herder, and Jacobi for Germany.

According to Maurice – who is always extremely attentive to the relationship between philosophical ideas and the more general historical context, within which philosophy never proceeds along merely internal lines or as the result of a direct filiation from ideas – the French Revolution represents the *terminus ad quem*, the end point of modernity. In France, Germany, and Great Britain, during the later eighteenth century, on the plane of intellectual speculation, philosophy reflects a radical crisis of civilisation, which spreads to all the domains of social life: ethics, religion, law, and politics. The crisis that pervades the world of culture and history indicates that the age of Locke is definitively over; but in Great Britain, as well as in Germany and France, the new philosophy plays a role which is critical rather than positive and creative, it helps to destroy that which is false, rather than to build the novelty which was brewing in the social and political sphere, which in some cases it even fears.⁹⁵

The greatest novelty is Kant's philosophy, which Maurice, like Coleridge before him, interprets as a radical criticism of every form of intellectualistic metaphysics; metaphysics (God, immortality, freedom) is for Kant a "delusion which cannot be attributed to any specific philosophy, but which lie in the very nature of Reason itself"; the truths of metaphysics and religion are "demonstrable" neither through the 'understanding' nor through 'theoretical reason' alone, which is a sort of 'rationalised understanding'; understanding and theoretical reason perform a merely negative function with regard to metaphysics, whereas what provides metaphysical truths with a foundation is the moral life. Kant's primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason is here interpreted by Maurice from a clearly fideistic perspective, as he reveals himself to be a faithful disciple of Coleridge: "all demonstrations of the being of God or immortality have been ineffectual. [...] It was not by the logical faculty that such truths ever could be arrived at. The plausibility of such arguments and demonstrations, whether deduced *a posteriori* from nature, or *a priori* from the human understanding, lay in this, that there was a higher witness of them present

⁹⁴ Cf. Maurice, *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 6–17; Id., *Encyclopaedia*, II, p. 647.

⁹⁵ See, for example, the judgement Maurice expresses on the figure of Edmund Burke, whose denunciation of eighteenth-century flat rationalism and empiricism ("the Locke age is over") he admires, but whom he reproaches for his incapability of grasping the movement of history and "the signs of a new time" which, albeit contradictorily, began to appear through the events of the French Revolution (Maurice, *Modern Philosophy*, in particular pp. 595–596).

within all of us. We impute its testimony to the arguments, and so make them valid, when, in truth, according to any conditions of the understanding, they are not valid. Let them all be shaken to pieces, but let those who shake them explain whence the faith in them was derived, and say whether this faith be not a greater confirmation of them than the demonstration would have been if they had been ever so solid and clear”.⁹⁶

Kant's practical reason turns here into the intuitive reason asserted by Coleridge and the Platonic tradition, into the reason theorised by Jacobi, which is faith, sentiment, and life; it is significant in this regard that the description of the history of philosophy strictly speaking comes to an end with Jacobi. The foundation underlying the truths of metaphysics and religion is certainly represented by moral consciousness, but there is something more: Kant's pure moral faith here is fostered and substantiated by historical faith.⁹⁷

As regards the philosophy of the age following the French Revolution, Maurice limits himself to providing a short outline (“a glimpse in the nineteenth century”): he only mentions the idealistic developments of Kantianism and reserves more space for Schleiermacher and Strauss than for Hegel, more religious themes and biblical criticism than speculative philosophy; as concerns England, he focuses his attention on the two figures of Bentham and Coleridge.

Another remarkable feature of Maurice's work are some interesting methodological choices which make it different from most other contemporary works. The chronological order, for example, is always followed scrupulously: if, for the sake of classification, we contravene the chronology and overlook the social and cultural context and the surrounding milieu, we inevitably – writes Maurice – misinterpret not only the thinker but also, and especially, the age in which he lived and exercised an influence⁹⁸; the historian of philosophy is concerned with the ideas elaborated by men, with their thoughts, but he connects them to the life of the men in whom these thoughts originated, stressing the influence they have exercised on life and history,

⁹⁶ Maurice, *Encyclopaedia*, II, p. 666; see also Id., *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 630–633. These are, according to Maurice, the conclusions reached by Kant, before him by Plato and the Platonic tradition, and during the modern age by Pascal, and after Kant, with even greater strength and rigour, by Jacobi. Theories quite similar to these can be found in the most important metaphysical work written by Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, published in 1825: metaphysical ideas are truths whose complete knowledge can only be attained by man in his entirety, that is, by free will as well as the understanding, and which therefore are neither speculative nor practical, but are speculative and practical at the same time; speculative reason can go beyond experience, but it is then unable to guarantee this world with objective reality, unless by moving from a purely speculative plane to a practical plane; only moral experience effects the conversion of the “*entia rationalia*”, i.e. the ideas of reason, into “*entia realia*” (Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, ed. by J. Beer, in *Collected Works*, IX, pp. 195 and 210–213); cf. C.R. Sanders, ‘Coleridge, F. D. Maurice, and the Distinction between the Reason and the Understanding’, *Publications of Modern Language Association of America*, LI (1936), pp. 459–465.

⁹⁷ Cf. Maurice, *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 644–648.

⁹⁸ “Chronology can never be forgotten with impunity in any record of human thoughts. Not merely the mind of the thinker, but the mind of the age over which he exercised an influence, is misinterpreted, if, through any dream of classifying men according to their opinions, or the subjects upon which they wrote, or the number of their disciples, we overlook the circumstances in which they were educated, those by whom they were surrounded in their early years, the questions which were then most occupying their country” (Maurice, *Modern Philosophy*, p. 602).

but also the influence which life and history, in turn, have exercised on the thoughts of men. The reason for this is profound: "Philosophy grows out of actions" Maurice proclaims vigorously, and in support of this theory he quotes a passage from Jacobi, with which he concludes his work: "Can a living philosophy be ever anything else than a history? [...] Philosophy cannot create its material; that lies in the history of the present or of the past. [...] Every period may be said to possess as well its own truth, which is the content of its different experiences, as its own living philosophy, which exhibits the predominant methods of action of that period in their connection and progress. If this is so, it follows that the acts of men cannot be so well deduced from their philosophy as their philosophy from their actions; that their history does not start from their habit of thinking, but their habit of thinking from their history".⁹⁹

For Maurice, philosophy is not identical with truth; the latter is to be sought, rather, in theology and in religion, which always require a historical element; he believes philosophy coincides with the philosophies which are made concrete in history and with the possibility, always open, of new philosophical perspectives: it is also for this reason that Maurice seems to privilege historiographical activity, in which he tends to adopt an irenic attitude inspired by his will to grasp that which is good in every thinker.

Another methodological aspect to which Maurice always adheres is his constant reference to the works of the philosophers. This is clearly evident especially in the case of the major philosophers, where his account always refers directly to the text: it is not a summary of doctrines provided by others, but a vast description of the thought of the philosophers by means of textual reading and a synthesis of their works. As for Plato, for example, Maurice avoids any attempt to derive a system from him: "Plato", he writes, "above all men must be studied in Plato. A hearty and sympathizing acquaintance with one Dialogue will do more to initiate a student into what is blunderingly called his system, than the reports of all philosophical critics and historians".¹⁰⁰ When he deals with the major philosophers, his description mostly takes the form of an often quite detailed summary of their most important works. His history of philosophy only intends to serve as an incentive and a guide to a reading of the works of the philosophers, which he limits himself to summarising and placing in a historical context.

Maurice's history of philosophy, however, was not very successful; the first disadvantage was that it was published in the form of an article for an encyclopaedia; the longer edition certainly circulated considerably as a textbook for students, but the four volumes came out after the middle of the century and they were published over a rather long time span, in a period in which English translations of more up to date textbooks by German writers were starting to be available; another disadvantage was perhaps that it paid little attention to the latest European philosophy, in a

⁹⁹ Maurice, *Modern Philosophy*, p. 649; cf. Jacobi, *David Hume*, in *Werke*, vol. II/1, p. 234.

¹⁰⁰ Maurice, *Encyclopaedia*, II p. 587; Id, *Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 129–130.

period in which a certain interest in the philosophy of German idealism was emerging in Great Britain.¹⁰¹

The successful history of the inductive sciences written by William Whewell, published in 1837, adopts an approach which is not unrelated to Kant, who, however, in this case too, is interpreted from a Platonic perspective. Three years later, Whewell was to formulate the fundamental lines of his theory of science in an equally famous work, *The Philosophy of Inductive Sciences*, in which his Platonizing Kantianism is even more evident: the foundation of the sciences is represented by some “fundamental ideas”, which are not provided by experience but which we use in order to structure experience and which are, therefore, transcendental forms of thought in a Kantian sense. Method, that is to say the inductive procedures of the different sciences, is a product of the historical progress and results from the connection of theoretical hypotheses and favourable verifications. Hence, the history of science also has a theoretical task because method becomes clear in history. The history of science is presented by Whewell from its origin in Greece up to the latest discoveries; it is subdivided into those which Whewell calls “epochs”, each of which has its own “prelude” and its “sequel”: the prelude is the period that prepares for the great discovery, the period in which the scientists still proceed in an uncertain fashion until an epochal change is reached, the great intuition that produces a revolution in that field of learning, which is followed by a long period in which scientists develop all the possible consequences of the theory in that and in the related fields.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ The first version, published in the form of an article, was praised by John Stuart Mill who, in a letter to R. Barclay Fox dated 9th September 1842, wrote: “Maurice’s [...] Moral Philosophy in the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana [...] is rather a history of ethical ideas. It is very interesting especially the analysis of Judaic life and society and of Plato and Aristotle” (J.S. Mill, *The Early Letters 1812 to 1848*, in *Collected Works*, XIII, p. 544); similar concepts are also expressed in Stuart Mill’s letter to Maurice dated 9th September 1842 (Id., *The Later Letters 1849 to 1873*, in *Collected Works*, XVII, pp. 1997–1998).

¹⁰² W. Whewell, *History of Inductive Sciences, from the earliest times to the present* (London: W. Parker, 1837), 3 vols; new ed., revised and continued, 1847; 3rd ed., 1857; the work was immediately translated into German: *Geschichte der induktiven Wissenschaften, der Astronomie, Physik, Mechanick, Chemie &c: von der frühesten Zeiten bis zu unserer Zeit*, [...] mit Anmerkungen von J.J. von Littrow (Stuttgart, 1840–41), 3 vols; W. Whewell, *The Philosophy of Inductive Science* (London: W. Parker, 1840); on Whewell see G.N. Cantor, ‘Between rationalism and romanticism: Whewell’s historiography of the inductive science’, in *William Whewell, a composite portrait*, ed. by M. Fisch and S. Schaffer (Oxford, 1991), pp. 67–86; S. Marcucci, ‘William Whewell e le kantiano-platoniche “idee” nello sviluppo storico della scienza’, *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, LXI, 2006 (pp. 103–116).

8.5 The Historiography of Philosophy: French and German Influences

It is surprising that, until the middle of the nineteenth century, Hegel was almost completely absent from British historiography. Knowledge of Hegel was not much greater in other European countries; but one of the reasons why Hegel was inadequately known in Great Britain is probably to be sought in the lack of confidence in what was coming from Germany, which was a legacy of the previous age and lasted long after the end of the Napoleonic wars, when relations and cultural exchanges with the Continent were renewed. Goethe, who had enjoyed widespread popularity during the last two decades of the previous century (see above, note 11), remained almost totally untranslated during the first decades of the nineteenth century: only in 1821 did the first translation of *Faust* appear, albeit expurgated and censored¹⁰³; in 1824 Thomas Carlyle translated *Wilhelm Meister*, but no new translations of Goethe's works appeared until the following decade.¹⁰⁴

German philosophical works remained almost completely untranslated: in 1819 a translation of Kant's *Prolegomena* and *Logic* appeared; but these translations, which had been made almost 20 years before, went totally unnoticed.¹⁰⁵ A French translation of Buhle's *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie* came out in Paris in 1816, edited by A.-J.-L. Jourdan, in 6 volumes, the first of which, in the form of an introduction, was devoted to ancient and medieval philosophy¹⁰⁶; the translation was almost unnoticed in Great Britain: a couple of journals simply noted the work

¹⁰³ Goethe, *Faustus* (London: Boosey & Sons, 1821), pp. vii-viii: "[...] Some parts are omitted which, it was thought, would be offensive to English readers, from the free, and occasionally immoral tendency of the allusions which they contain [...]. The prologue has also been passed over: it carries the scene to heaven, whither Mephistopheles ascends for the purpose of obtaining permission to tempt Faustus; and, both in conception and execution, is repugnant to notions of propriety such as are entertained in this country".

¹⁰⁴ On the translations of Goethe's *Faust* cf. Morgan, *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation*, pp. 160–167.

¹⁰⁵ *Prolegomena to Every Future Metaphysic*, transl. by J. Richardson (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1819); *Logic, with a life*, transl. by J. Richardson (London: Simpkin and Marshall 1819); only few mentions as works being printed, (see *New Monthly Magazine*, XI, no. 66, pp. 538 [*Logic*] e 539 [*Prolegomena*] and *Quarterly Review*, XXI, no. 42, Apr. 1819, p. 559 [*Logic*]). Most of the copies must have remained unsold, since 17 years later, in 1836, the two volumes were once again put on sale with the same title page giving the date of publication as 1819 but bound together with a third book entitled *An Enquiry into the Grounds of Proof for the Existence of God*, which was followed by the indication "printed in 1819, but now first published"; the volume had a new title page which bore the new title common to the whole collection, that is *Metaphysical Works of [...] Immanuel Kant* [no indication of publisher] (London, 1836); on the first English translations of Kant, cf. Micheli, *The First English Translations of Kant*, pp. 77–104, and Id., 'Richardson, John', in DNCBPh, pp. 949–950.

¹⁰⁶ J.G. Buhle, *Histoire de la philosophie moderne depuis la renaissance des lettres jusqu'à Kant, précédé d'un abrégé de la philosophie ancienne depuis Thalès jusqu'au XIV siècle*, traduit [...] par A.-J.-L. Jourdan (Paris: Fournier, 1816); on the translation of Jourdan, which greatly contributed to the spread of Buhle's work outside the German areas, cf. *Models*, vol. III, pp. 833–835.

among the “books recently imported”¹⁰⁷; in August 1817 an anonymous review of it appeared in the *Monthly Review*, which is the only one we are aware of¹⁰⁸; its author was William Taylor, a key figure in Anglo-German literary relation in the Romantic era.¹⁰⁹ He expressed a positive opinion on the quality of the translation, but he had strong reserves as to Buhle’s work and, in particular, its use for the English student; as for ancient philosophy, Taylor observes, “the opinion of antient philosophers are frequently translated into the scholastic dialect of Kant, and are consequently misrepresented” (p. 451); he expresses a decidedly more positive verdict on the volumes that deal with modern philosophy; when, however, he comes to the final chapter, “which is exclusively devoted to the history of the Critical Philosophy”, Taylor’s opinion changes radically; he concentrates on the pages that Buhle devotes to the first *Critique*, and the Analytic in particular, and it all seems to be nothing but an “unmeaning assemblage of words which this writer [Kant] holds out as philosophy”; in particular, with reference to the pages, quoted in full in the review, in which Buhle summarises the Analytic of principles, here – writes Taylor – “the Professor [Kant] at length plunges completely into the mud of unintelligibility. [...] This is by no means the climax of obscurity to be found in this esoteric writer [Kant]” (pp. 461–464). Taylor does not dwell on the development of Kantism, where Buhle described the thought of Fichte at length: “it is common”, he simply says, “in that country [Germany] to attach a sudden importance to philosophic novelties [...]. To this local tendency we may in some degree ascribe the success of the Critical Philosophy” and its subsequent development (p. 464). Taylor concludes: Buhle’s *Geschichte* “deserves high praises, and will form a convenient text-book for those lectures in our public institutions who have chosen the history of philosophy for their topic”; but he would greatly discourage “an entire [English] translation”; at most one could make “a judicious abridgement, because [...] the admixture of the Kantian nomenclature should every where be espunged” (p. 465).

During the 1820s there was a slow revival of interest in German culture, albeit in theological works in particular. People also began to resume the practice of educational journeys to Germany, mostly to Göttingen, which was now under British rule again. Schleiermacher and Ferdinand Christian Baur’s works, the latter of whom was the founder of the school of Tübingen, started to have some influence in England, but in most cases these works were looked on with hostility, suspicion, and fear. Edward Bouverie Pusey, for example, spent 2 years, from 1825 to 1827, in German universities (Göttingen, Berlin, Bonn) to study theology; once back, he

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *Edinburgh Review*, XXVII, no. 54, Dec. 1816, p. 542; *Quarterly Review*, XVI, no. 31, Oct. 1816, p. 286.

¹⁰⁸ Rev. Buhle, *Histoire de la Philosophie Moderne*, transl. by A.-J.-L. Jourdan (Paris, 1816), *Monthly Review*, LXXXIII, 1817, pp. 449–465.

¹⁰⁹ On William Taylor of Norwich see D. Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh: 1788–1802*, pp. 258–260; see also *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the late William Taylor of Norwich*, ed. by J.W. Robberds (London, 1843), 2 vols. Two decades earlier Taylor had reviewed Tiedemann’s *Geist* (*Monthly Review*, XX, ser. 2, Aug. 1796, pp. 573–580; XXI, Dec. 1796, pp. 504–511; XXIV, Dec. 1797, pp. 521–527).

wrote *A Historical Enquiry into the Probable Causes of the Rationalist Character lately Predominant in the Theology of Germany* (London, 1828–1830), which aroused a lively polemic and debate within the Church of England, giving rise to the Oxford Movement. In the same period, Hugh James Rose published a series of lectures held at Cambridge,¹¹⁰ in which he expressed a firm and radical condemnation of contemporary German theologians, from Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette to Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider; in the second edition, the German theologian Philipp Albert Stapfer mentions Hegel in an appendix as the inspirer of the emerging school of Tübingen (*ibid.*, “Supplement”, p. vi note).¹¹¹

The situation seemed to change in England at the end of the 1820s and then during the 1830s: indeed, the movement promoting political reforms – even though it was for the most part under the sway of radicals like Bentham and James Mill, who were little acquainted with German culture – started to open up to issues relating to culture, religious renewal, and the reform of educational institutions. Concrete reform of the two English universities had not yet taken place, but the birth in 1826 of University College, the first nucleus of the future university of London, was the beginning of a process of transformation. Little by little, the interest in German culture increased, initially only on the plane of literature but subsequently also on a philosophical plane.¹¹²

¹¹⁰H.J. Rose, *The State of Protestantism in Germany* [Cambridge, 1825], 2nd edition, enlarged, with an appendix (London, 1829).

¹¹¹As for the reception in Great Britain of German studies in the field of theology and especially Biblical criticism, cf. J. Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany* (London, 1984). On the theological and religious resistance to the introduction of Hegel, cf. P. Robbins, *British Hegelians: 1875–1925* (New York and London, 1982), pp. 26–37.

¹¹²Between 1833 and 1843, at least eight different translations of Goethe’s *Faust* came out (cf. Morgan, *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation*, pp. 161–168). At the same time, a certain interest in German philosophy manifested itself: as regards Kant’s works, in 1836, in addition to the new circulation of the texts mentioned above (see above, note 105), translations of his works on ethics appeared (*The Metaphysic of Ethics by Immanuel Kant*, transl. by J.W. Semple, Edinburgh, 1836, which included the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Ethics*, the chapters I and III of the second *Critique*, and the *Doctrine of Virtue*), then, in 1838, the *Religion within the Boundary of Pure Reason by Immanuel Kant* was published (transl. by J.W. Semple, Edinburgh, 1838), and finally the first *Critique* appeared (*Critick of Pure Reason, translated from the original of Immanuel Kant* [the translation came out anonymously, but in fact it was carried out by Francis Haywood], London, 1838); as for the translators, cf. Micheli, ‘Haywood, Francis’ and ‘Semple, John William’, in DNCBPh, pp. 508–509 and 997–998: in the prefaces to the texts, both translators establish a parallel between the Kantian search for the *a priori* first principles of knowledge, the Scottish philosophy of the ‘common sense’, and French eclecticism. The changing attitude perceptible in Great Britain towards German culture is also confirmed by the fact that at the end of the 1820s, and then during the 1830s, there appeared new literary reviews which were particularly attentive to the literary production from the Continent, in particular from France and Germany; the most important of them were *The Foreign Quarterly Review* (London, 1827–1846); *The Athenaeum. London Literary and Critical Journal* [then: *The Athenaeum*] (London, 1828–1921); *The Foreign Review, and continental miscellany* (London, 1828–1830); *The British and Foreign Review; or, European Quarterly Journal* (London, 1835–1844).

In 1829 the French translation of Tennemann's *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* by Cousin came out; the translation was immediately mentioned in the major literary journals both in Britain and the United States; a lengthy and positive review appeared in June 1830 in the journal *Athenaeum*.¹¹³

In 1832, Arthur Johnson, Fellow and Tutor of Wadham College in Oxford, translated Tennemann's *Grundriss*.¹¹⁴ In October of the same year, the work was reviewed by William Hamilton¹¹⁵: "it was", he writes, "with considerable interest, that we read the announcement of an English translation [of Tennemann's *Grundriss*] by a gentleman distinguished for his learning among the Tutors of Oxford [...]. Independently of its utility, we hailed the publication as a symptom of the revival, in England, of a taste for philosophical speculation; and this more especially, as it emanated from that University [Oxford] in which [...] Psychology and Metaphysics, as beyond the average comprehension of the College Fellows, had remained not only untaught, but their study discouraged, if not formally proscribed [...]"'. An examination of a few paragraphs of the work, Hamilton continues, "proved the folly of our expectations. We found it to be a bare translation, and one concentrating every possible defect. We discovered, in the first place, that the translator was but superficially versed in the German language; in the second, that he was wholly ignorant even of the first letter in the alphabet of German philosophy; in the third, that he was almost equally unacquainted with every other philosophy, ancient and modern; in the fourth, that he covertly changes every statement of his author he may not like; in the fifth, that he silently suppresses every section, sentence, clause, word he is suspicious of not understanding; and in the sixth, that he reviles, without clarity, the philosophy and philosophers he is wholly incapable of appreciating"; and he thus concludes: "We do not mean to insinuate that it was so intended (albeit the thought certainly struck us), but, in point of fact, this translation is admirably calculated to turn all metaphysical enquiries into contempt" (pp. 162–163). There follows a long list of the mistakes and misunderstandings, due, according to Hamilton, on one hand to a total "ignorance of Kantian philosophy" and, on the other, to concerns of a religious nature (pp. 163–177).

Johnson's translation of Tennemann's *Grundriss*, albeit with the limitations pointed out by Hamilton, is still important because it was conceived for students of Oxford; it was, therefore, a first indication of a presence of the history of ancient

¹¹³ *Manuel de l'histoire de la philosophie*, traduit de l'allemand de Tennemann par V. Cousin (Paris: Pichon et Didier, 1829), 2 vols; cf. *Athenaeum*, no. 137, June 12, 1830, pp. 354–356; no. 139, June 26, 1830, pp. 386–388; the work was cited in the main literary journals in England, Scotland, and the United States; on the French translation of the *Grundriss* see also *Models*, III, pp. 921–922.

¹¹⁴ W.G. Tennemann, *A Manual of the History of Philosophy*, translated [...] by the Rev. Arthur Johnson (Oxford: Talboys, 1832); the translation was made from the 1829 German edition and took into account Cousin's French translation as well; indeed, like the latter, it abridges the description of German philosophy after Schelling, limiting itself to providing bio-bibliographical information; moreover, the translator takes care to inform the reader that he omitted some passages which, in his eyes, were critical of the Christian religion.

¹¹⁵ *Edinburgh Review*, LVI, no. 111, Oct. 1832, pp. 160–177 (now in Hamilton, *Discussions*, I, pp. 100–117).

philosophy in the teaching at Oxford and Cambridge, where, in the academic environment at least, however, there was still some hostility to Kant's philosophy and its idealistic developments. It was at Oxford during the 1830s that, for the first time, the study of Plato was associated with that of Aristotle; the history of ancient philosophy appeared in university teaching, at least as an auxiliary discipline in classical education. In 1838–39 an English translation was published in Oxford of the first three volumes (devoted to classical Greek philosophy) of Ritter's *Geschichte der Philosophie alter Zeit*¹¹⁶; the choice was justified, we read in the *Preface* by Alexander Morrison, who made the translation, on one hand because of “the absence in the native literature of a corresponding work”, as those by Stanley and Enfield could no longer be considered sufficient for a “student of philosophy”¹¹⁷; on the other, because of the “fitness of Ritter's work to supply the deficiency of our literature”. Morrison justifies his choice by examining the possible alternatives: the *Histoire comparée* by Dégerando, a “follower of Locke, [...] reviews the ancient philosophers in reference solely to their respective theories of the origin of human ideas”; the *Geschichte* by Tennemann, “in his estimate of all anterior systems, adopted that of his great master [Kant] as his criterion”; the *Cours de Philosophie* by Cousin “of the details of history [...] presents but a meagre and rapid sketch [...] These lectures are at best but a series of general reflections, a continued exposition of the author's eclectic theory, by an enumeration and production, out of the past states of philosophy, of those fundamental truths which, as necessary and imperishable, are still to be found in its actual condition”. These works represent three attempts – this is their limit – which claim to reduce the history of ancient philosophy to a single point of view imposed *a priori*: “but thus to overbear facts by speculation is destructive of history, to which it is essential that it be allowed to tell its own tale”; and here, with reference to this last critical point, Morrison compares, in his negative judgement, Cousin's lectures to Hegel's *Vorlesungen*, “though, in truth, the French philosopher does not, with his German master, pretend to be in full possession of all truth”; on the contrary, the high merit of Ritter in this respect is fully recognized, “as well in extent of erudition, and patience in combination and research, as in acuteness of criticism, and inductive sagacity in the reconstruction of olden histories and systems”.¹¹⁸

Known in England in the second half of the 1830s were the *Histoire de la philosophie allemande depuis Leibnitz jusqu'à Hegel* by Barchou de Penhoën, and the *Essai sur la philosophie de Hegel* by Joseph Willm: these were lengthy accounts of the works of the authors studied, but they were somewhat averse to the idealistic

¹¹⁶A.H. Ritter, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, transl. by A.J.W. Morrison, vols 1–3, Oxford: Talboys, 1838–1839; vol. 4, London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846; the fourth volume, devoted to the “History of the decline of ancient philosophy” in the Roman and Christian age, was published in London in 1846. The translation was cited (see *Athenaeum*, no. 531, Dec. 1837, pp. 938–939) and reviewed [Philip Pusey], *Dublin University Magazine*, XII, no. 67, Aug. 1838, pp. 157–167.

¹¹⁷Reprints of Stanley's and Enfield's works were available; see above note 4.

¹¹⁸Morrison, *Translator's Preface*, in Ritter, *History*, I, no page numbers.

development of Kantism, and to Hegel's philosophy in particular, for reasons of a philosophical but above all a religious nature.¹¹⁹

The situation in Scotland and the United States was very different. From the early 1830s onwards, the more recent history of philosophy, in particular the developments of German philosophy up to Hegel, also became known by way of French works: Cousin's *Cours de Philosophie. Introduction à l'histoire de la philosophie* [1828], which, as we have seen, had already been reviewed by Hamilton, was well-known and used, and in 1832 a first English translation of it appeared in Boston.¹²⁰ Two years later, in 1834, Caleb Sprague Henry, "a Christian transcendentalist", published a translation of the second volume of Cousin's *Cours de Philosophie* [1829] in New York,¹²¹ in particular of the sections (lessons 16–25) in which the French philosopher presented, and subjected to criticism, the radical "empiricism" of Locke's *Essay*: "Reid [i.e. the Scottish school] and Kant", Henry wrote in his preface, "have [...] incidentally given criticisms to Locke, on many important points. A regular, complete, and thorough examination, at the present days, seemed, however, to be needed. This, the work of M. Cousin supplies" (*ibid.*, pp. iii-iv). Several years later, in 1841, C.S. Henry again translated the *Précis de l'histoire de la philosophie* of the Collège de Juilly¹²²; the translation was based on the first French edition: the French original was summarised for the part describing Oriental philosophy, and the part on the philosophy of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century was greatly enlarged.¹²³ The work circulated widely as a textbook in the United States and in the Scottish universities.

¹¹⁹A.-T.-H. Barchou de Penhoën, *Histoire de la philosophie allemande depuis Leibnitz jusqu'à Hegel*, 2 vols, (Paris: Charpentier, 1836). Willm's essay on Hegel's philosophy was first published between 1835 and 1837 in the form of articles in the *Revue Germanique*, which was also widely read in Great Britain, and was then integrated into a vast historical treatise published in Paris in four volumes: *Histoire de la philosophie allemande depuis Kant jusqu'à Hegel* (Paris: Ladrangé, 1846–1849).

¹²⁰V. Cousin, *Introduction to the History of Philosophy* [...], transl. by H.G. Linberg (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, 1832). The translation was signalled and reviewed favourably in British and above all American periodicals; a second translation, made from the French edition of 1841 (which included the lessons he held in 1828 and 1829) came out in 1852 in New York (*Course of the History of Modern Philosophy*, transl. by O.W. Wight, New York: Appleton & Co., 1852, 2 vols; repr. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1852).

¹²¹V. Cousin, *Elements of Psychology, included in a critical examination of Locke's Essay on the human understanding*, Hartford, 1834 [New York, 1838²; 1842³; 1856⁴]. On C.S. Henry cf. W. Riley, 'La philosophie française en Amérique', *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*, LXXXIV, 1917, pp. 409–414, and R.V. Wells, *Three Christian Transcendentalists: James Marsh, Caleb Sprague Henry, Frederick Henry Hedge* (New York, 1943), pp. 49–95, 193–201, and 218–219.

¹²²*Précis de l'histoire de la philosophie, publié par les directeurs* [i.e. Louis-Antoine de Salinis and Bruno-Dominique de Scorbiac] *du Collège de Juilly* (Paris: Hachette, 1834); cf. above, pp. 360–363.

¹²³*An Epitome of the History of Philosophy. Being the work adopted by the University of France for instruction in the colleges and high schools. Translated from the French, with additions, and a continuation of the history from the time of Reid to the present day*, by C.S. Henry, 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1841); subsequent reprints: 1842, 1846, 1855, 1856, 1859, 1869, and 1874 (another edition: Aberdeen: Brown & Co., 1849; 1865).

In England, text books on the history of philosophy started to be required, as we have seen, and not only by Oxford and Cambridge, but also, and perhaps above all by the numerous Academies for dissenters; these textbooks, however, were strongly influenced by a lasting mistrust towards everything that came from the Continent, in particular the philosophy of Kant and its idealistic developments, a lack of trust that was only gradually overcome, thanks to the influence of the French eclectic school, and the spiritualistic developments of German philosophy.

Thomas Morell, who, from 1821, was president of Wymondley (later Coward) College, a dissenting Academy, and the author of successful text books for the teaching of ancient (Greek and Roman) and modern history,¹²⁴ published a textbook on the history of philosophy and the sciences in 1827.¹²⁵ In the brief introduction he looked at the distinction between the “intellectual sciences”, “those branches of knowledge which relate to *mind*”, and the “physical sciences”, “those which relate to *matter*”, which had been put forward by Dugald Stewart in his ‘Preface’ to *Dissertation First* (which he quoted)¹²⁶; he concluded: “full convinced of the justice, and even of the necessity of this distinction, the author of the following Essays has endeavoured, especially in the more advanced periods of the history, to observe this boundary line, and assign to the physical and intellectual sciences their appropriate divisions” (pp. 11–12). Morell subdivides the history of thought into “four great periods”: the first, “that of remote antiquity”, coincides with the philosophy of the Oriental peoples, and here the subdivision is only of a geographical nature (pp. 16–71); with the second period, which “embraces the literary history of Greeks and Romans” (pp. 72–240), there is a chronological order of narration, but there is a distinction between the different disciplines (mathematics, physics, dialectics or logics, metaphysics, ethics), the history of each of which is described separately; for the medieval age too there is a distinction (pp. 241–319) between the history of the “physical sciences” and the history of “metaphysics”, and these are internally subdivided into the Arabs (who are treated at length) and the Europeans; with the fourth, “and more important period, from the revival of letters to the close of the 17th

¹²⁴Th. Morell, *Studies in History, containing* [vol.1] *the History of Greece, from the earliest period to its final subjugation by the Romans, in a series of essays, accompanied with references to original authorities, moral and religious reflections, and historical exercises for youth, and a correct map of ancient Greece* (printed for the author, St Neots, 1813; Philadelphia: B. Johnson, 1819; London: B.J. Holdsworth, 1827⁶); Id., *Studies in History, containing* [vol. 2] *the History of Rome* [...] (printed for the author, St. Neots, 1814; London 1827⁵); Id., *Studies in History, containing the History of England, from its earliest record to the death of Georg III* [...], 2 vols (London: B.J. Holdsworth, 1827⁵). The volumes, conceived as school text books, also contained brief chapters on the history of philosophy. The Morell family were French Huguenots who had found refuge in England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; many of them became ministers in English Calvinist Congregations and teachers in Academies and colleges responsible for the education of the nonconformist clergy; cf. Micheli, ‘Morell, Thomas’, DNCBPh, pp. 822–823.

¹²⁵Th. Morell, *Elements of the History of Philosophy and Science, from the earliest authentic records to the commencement of the eighteenth century* (London: B.J. Holdsworth, 1827).

¹²⁶Morell, *Elements*, pp. 11–12; cf. D. Stewart, *Dissertation First*, in *Supplement to fourth, fifth, and sixth Editions of the Encyclopaedia Britannica*, I, pp. 3–17.

century”, the description is further subdivided, due above all to the progress in the field of the sciences of nature: we have the history of the “abstract sciences” (mathematics), that of the physical sciences (astronomy, mechanics, hydrodynamics, optics), and finally that of the “intellectual sciences” (pp. 462–545). Referring to these “intellectual sciences”, after a brief introduction, Morell concentrates his attention on Bacon (pp. 472–495), Descartes (pp. 496–507), Leibniz (pp. 522–533) and Locke (pp. 533–545). The account ends with the close of the seventeenth century, and this, writes Morell, is because “the age of Locke and Newton constitutes a most remarkable æra in the history of human mind, since these illustrious individuals may justly be accounted *founders of new schools in physical and intellectual science*”; after this period “the ramifications of human knowledge have become so numerous, as to require a series of volumes for even the most cursory review” (p. viii; cf. also p. 14). The sources Morell declares he has quoted from are Enfield’s abridgment of Brucker’s *Historia critica* (above all for ancient and medieval philosophy), the *Dissertation First* [part i, 1815; part ii, 1821] by Dugald Stewart (on the progress of metaphysics and ethics in the modern age), the *Dissertation Second* [part i, 1816; part ii, 1819] by John Playfair (on the progress of the mathematical and physical sciences), and the *Dissertation Third* [1817] by William Thomas Brande (on the progress of the chemical sciences), published between 1815 and 1821 in the *Supplement* to the 4th, 5th, and 6th Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Morell’s work was relatively successful: it was quoted and reviewed in the principal British literary journals; albeit brief and schematic, all the reviewers recognised its use as a text book.¹²⁷

In 1833 Robert Blakey, a presbyterian, radically-oriented journalist involved in the Chartist movement with a lively interest in philosophy, published a history of moral philosophy in two volumes.¹²⁸ In the work, which, like Morell’s *Elements*, did not aspire to be anything more than a simple text book for students, the author – we read in the preface – attempts to avoid all judgement and set out, “fairly and candidly”, the principal “teories of moral”, reserving himself the privilege “of stating, in the last chapter but one, to what particular theory [he was] inclined to give the

¹²⁷ “Though a very dry, and here and there intolerably meagre, this is not a useless compilation”, *Monthly Magazine*, IV, no. 24, Dec. 1827, p. 641; cf. also *Literary Chronicle*, no. 421, June, 9, 1827, pp. 353–355, and no. 422, June, 16, 1827, pp. 373–75; *New Monthly Magazine*, XXI, Sept. 1, 1827, p. 373; *Monthly Review*, VI (3rd s.), no. 26, Oct. 1827, pp. 197–201; *Eclectic Review*, XXIX, 1828, pp. 545–551.

¹²⁸ R. Blakey, *History of Moral Science* (London: James Duncan, 1833; 1836²), 2 vols. On Robert Blakey, radically-oriented political journalist, historian of philosophy, and, for a brief period (1849–1851), professor at Queen’s College Belfast, cf. S. Mathieson, ‘Charlemagne, Common Sense, and Chartism: how Robert Blakey wrote his History of Political Literature’, *History of European Ideas*, XLV (2019), pp. 866–883; cf. also *Memoirs of Dr. Robert Blakey: Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, Queen’s College, Belfast*, ed. by Rev. Henry Miller (London, 1879); R. Hawkins, *The Life of Blakey Robert: 1795–1878* (Morpeth, 2010).

preference".¹²⁹ Once he has established in the first chapter what is to be understood by "moral philosophy" (I, pp. 1–12), he sets out in two brief chapter the moral doctrines of the ancient, medieval and early modern philosophers (I, pp. 13–42). The account proper starts with the "moral and political philosophy" of Hobbes, and continues with the teachings of the more and relatively less known British philosophers, from Ralph Cudworth to his contemporaries Thomas Brown and Daniel Dewar (I, pp. 43–374; II, pp. 1–298). The individual thinkers are presented in a rigorously chronological order; each is described in a chapter; first there is some brief biographical information, followed by an account of their system. Blakely only devotes a few pages to the teachings of the moral philosophers of Continental Europe (II, pp. 299–313): "on every topic connected with human nature our continental neighbours", he writes, "have shown a disposition to adopt extravagant theories, and wild and fanciful conjectures".¹³⁰ The only important exception are those writers on the Continent who "have treated of the principles and maxims of civil law and jurisprudence. These deserve our highest admiration and praise": the reference here is to Grotius and Pufendorf, whom Blakey compares to two philosophers of law, more recent and well-known (especially the former) in England and the United States: the Swiss Emer de Vattel and the German Georg Friedrich von Martens; Blakey discusses the thought of these writers over several pages (II, pp. 300–305). Then he briefly mentions some philosophers of Continental Europe. The first is Spinoza, and here he limits himself to merely stating the principle of his system: "the universe and the Deity are one and the same Being", referring those who are

¹²⁹ Blakey, *History of Moral Science*, I, pp. vi-vii: "In entering on the examination of the various systems which I have noticed, two courses seemed to present themselves for me to follow. The one, to criticise each theory as it came under review, in order to show how it either agreed or differed from some theory of my own; the other, to give the arguments on each side for any system, fairly and candidly, and allow the reader to draw his own conclusion respecting them. I have in general followed the latter plan. I have endeavoured to give the scope and bearing of every author's system in as full a manner as the importance of the subject or the plan of this work justify; reserving to myself the privilege of stating, in the last chapter but one, to what particular theory I am inclined to give the preference".

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 299–300: "Among several of our English moralists, it is true, this inclination to consult the imagination rather than the judgment, had been partially indulged in; but then the speculations of these writers have always been greatly influenced and tempered by principles of natural and revealed religion, so generally diffused among the great bulk of the nation. And even in those solitary cases where these principles might seem to have been but lightly esteemed in an author's judgement, he has had to shape his course with a reference to their influence on those around him. But on the continent a different state of things has commonly prevailed. Here [i.e. on the Continent] the mass of the people have been sunk into a state of mental lethargy by the stupifying influence of a degrading superstition; while the learned, on the other hand, cherishing a deep-rooted contempt for the credulity of the multitude, have run into the opposite extreme, and ridiculed and set at nought every sound religious principle. In considering the nature of man, they have looked upon him as a mere insulated being, without any reference to the relations in which he stand to the Great Author of his existence; and hence it is, in the majority of cases, that the continental philosophy of human nature presents to a well-constituted mind such a repulsive aspect, and is so profusely saturated with every thing that is impure, ridiculous, profane, whimsical, and pernicious".

interested to Condillac's *Traité des Systèmes*, "where the poison and the antidote are joined together"; on Spinoza's "ethical opinions" he declares he "knows nothing", and yet refers to the moderately positive opinion formulated by Schlegel: "the morality of Spinoza is not indeed that of the Bible, for he was not Christian; but it is still a pure and noble morality, resembling that of the ancient Stoics, perhaps possessing considerable advantages over that system".¹³¹ There follow three brief paragraphs on Leibniz (II, pp. 306–308), Malebranche (II, p. 308) and Buffier (II, pp. 308–309); their moral doctrines are comprehensible to Blakey only if he compares them to those of the more well-known British thinkers Shaftesbury (Leibniz), Wollaston, Clarke (Malebranche), and Reid, Oswald and Beattie (Buffier); there are a few pages on Rochefoucault, whose "system of morals is founded upon self-love in its very worst form", and Helvetius, who is accused not only of utilitarianism, but also irreligion (II, pp. 309–312); the account ends with half a page on Kant: "I must confess myself", writes Blakey, "completely ignorant of the Critical or Transcendental Philosophy of Immanuel Kant. I have made several attempts to get a glimpse of his system, but have been obliged to give up the undertaking in despair. Talk of scholastic jargon and barbarism!" (II, p. 313). The penultimate chapter is devoted to a comparative judgement of the systems of moral philosophy from Hobbes to Berkeley's contemporaries, and here Blakey's eclecticism emerges: "There are none of these different systems that are not in some degree founded on truth; but the great imperfection which runs through them all is, that they attempt to generalise too much. We cannot resolve all the moral feelings and habits of our nature into one general principle". The theory to which Blakey confesses himself to be partial (but *as a mere theory*) is that of Archbishop King, "that virtue depends upon the will of God" (II, pp. 319–320); the last chapter is devoted to justifying this choice, and it deals with morality in the Holy Scriptures (II, pp. 341–357).

The work was relatively successful, and 3 years later, in 1836, a second edition came out. The numerous reviews, though not neglecting to point out its many limits, nevertheless underlined its use, given the lack – they noted – of similar works in Great Britain¹³²; another aspect which was stressed by many was the attempt to maintain a neutral approach. However, John Stuart Mill, who reviewed the work in October 1833,¹³³ although he was also able to recognize Blakey's honesty: "he

¹³¹ Cf. F. von Schlegel, *Lectures on the History of Literature, ancient and modern* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1818), II, p. 244.

¹³² cf. *Literary Gazette*, no. 853, May 25, 1833, pp. 328–329: "To meet a desideratum which not only the general and intelligent, but the learned and philosophical reader must feel, Mr. Blakey has here produced a work of great utility" (p. 328); *Eclectic Review*, XI, Feb. 1834, pp. 136–149: "A correct and condensed view of the principal theories in moral science, has long been felt to be a desideratum by those who have been engaged in prosecuting such inquiries [...]. In English literature, we know no other historians of philosophy than Enfield and Stanley" (pp. 136–137).

¹³³ [J. Stuart Mill], *Monthly Repository*, VII, n.s., Oct. 1833, pp. 661–669 (now in *Essays*, in J.S. Mill, *Collected Works*, X, pp. 21–29). Even more disapproving is the judgment expressed by Stuart Mill ("a foolish book by a man named Blakey [...] for writing which is utterly unfit, being a man who [...] has no eyes, only a pair of *glasses* and, I will add, almost *opaque* ones") in a letter to Thomas Carlyle dated 5 October 1833 (*Letters*, in J.S. Mill, *Collected Works*, XII, p. 181).

mostly treats with due respect all who by their speculations have deserved any. To the liberal appreciation of merit which he commonly evinces, there are indeed exceptions; and, unfortunately, in the very cases in which there is most merit to appreciate. But this is a very different thing from arrogance. It is not because an author differs from Mr. Blakey, that Mr. Blakey deems scornfully of him, but because, in addition to differing from Mr. Blakey, he has been cried down by the world - that is to say, the English world. Over-reliance on our own judgment is one thing, over-reliance on the judgment of the world when in unison with our own, is another. The latter is the failing of a weaker, but certainly of a more modest mind. The misfortune is, that the contempt of those who have confidence enough to be scornful only when they are backed by a crowd, is aptest to fall upon those who are most in advance of their age"; and indeed, "Mr. Blakey's strongest expressions of disdain are divided between the association-philosophy as taught by Hartley, and the metaphysics of the German school; in other words, the only metaphysical doctrines which he utterly despises, are the two systems between which, and which only, almost every metaphysician, deserving the name, in all Europe, is now beginning to be convinced that it is necessary to choose: the two most perfect forms of the only two theories of the human mind which are, strictly speaking, possible. Both are alike worthless in Mr. Blakey's eyes, because it has been the fashion among English writers to treat both with disrespect, and because he himself understands neither of them. The difference is, he pronounces the one [the German school of metaphysics] unintelligible, because it is so to him; the other [the association-philosophy] he flatters himself that he sees through and through, and can discern that there is nothing in it" (p. 663).

In the second half of the 1830s, Blakey became increasingly involved in politics; in 1835, standing on a radical platform, he was elected to the council of Morphet, the town of his birth, where he became mayor for a year in November 1836; in 1838 he bought the *Northern Liberator*, a newspaper of Chartist orientation, and for an article that was published in it he was prosecuted; forced to sell the newspaper in 1841 he left England for the Continent; he travelled through Belgium and France for several years, where he was able to use the libraries and cultivate his interest in philosophy; when he returned to England in 1848 he published a history of philosophy¹³⁴ that earned him the appointment in 1849 as Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at Queen's College Belfast.¹³⁵ Due to the great breadth of its scope, it is certainly the most interesting, as well as the most well-known of the works he published; its great novelty, compared to his previous history of moral philosophy, is the large amount of space given this time to the theoretical philosophy produced

¹³⁴R. Blakey, *History of Philosophy of Mind: Embracing the Opinions of all Writers on Mental Sciences from the Earliest period to the Present Time* (London: Saunders, 1848), 4 vols. (2nd ed., London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1850).

¹³⁵He was dismissed in October 1851, officially for health reason; as to the real reasons for his dismissal (probably absenteeism), see Mathieson, p. 879.

on the Continent, to which the author now looks with a certain interest, the fruit of his long stay in Belgium and France.¹³⁶

By the “philosophy of mind”, Blakey intended what Aristotle had understood as “first philosophy”, that is, metaphysics, speculative philosophy in so far as it is distinct from “natural or physical philosophy”, i.e. the science of nature, and from “moral philosophy”, which has as its object human behaviour (*History of the Philosophy of Mind*, I, pp. xviii-xxv). The first volume sets out the history of “mental philosophy”, from the Ionic school to the high Middle Ages; the second goes from scholasticism to Locke; the third is devoted to eighteenth-century philosophy, while the fourth deals with the philosophy of the first half of the nineteenth century. The aim of the work was purely informative; the thinkers are distinguished by geographical area; there is a paragraph on each thinker,¹³⁷ even the minor and the obscure, which contains the essential bio-bibliographical information and a brief summary of their thought. There are two “modes” of writing a history of philosophy, Blakey declares in the introduction: “The one is to classify authors under general heads, in conformity with a principle of resemblance or affinity subsisting among their respective speculative opinions. This is called philosophical history. The other is, to follow the order of time, and give a distinct and personal outline of every philosopher’s views, in the precise order in which chronology develops them. Both plans have their advantages and disadvantages [...]. To me, in all the purely historical works of a classified kind that I have seen, there has appeared no small degree of confusion; and this I believe is commonly felt as a great inconvenience by young students, when they enter upon the study of mental science. Generalisation on the philosophy of mind ought not to precede observation and instruction, but to

¹³⁶ “My sojourn on the Continent”, he writes, “opened up to me a world of interest. It was an intellectual new birth. Every day and hour imparted fresh mental topics for thought and reflection. My own narrowness of mind and confined literary sympathies were ever before my eyes, and while they depressed they yet stimulated me to overcome, if possible, my shortcomings and prejudices. I shall never forget the lively sentiments of delight I felt in this new struggle; and I laboured almost night and day without experiencing the slightest symptoms of weariness or exhaustion. I gave a methodical arrangement to my reading and study. I had note-books for separate topics, chiefly mental philosophy, moral philosophy, logic, and politics. To read for mere amusement seemed, in my case, a decided waste of time” (*Memoirs*, p. 137); “I cultivated an acquaintance with the German and Italian languages. The French I could read tolerably well when I left England” (p. 118); “[...] all the public libraries I had visited in France, in Belgium, and even in Germany” (p. 120).

¹³⁷ In vol. IV, for example, devoted to the history of the philosophy of the mind “from the commencement of the nineteenth century to the present day [1848]”, chapter 1, devoted to the “Metaphysical writers of Great Britain from the year 1800 to the present day”, is subdivided into 44 paragraphs, each of which deals with one thinker; chapter 2 (German area) is subdivided into 31 paragraphs, chapter 3 (France) into 41, chapter 4 (Italy) into 42, chapter 5 (Belgium and Holland) into 50, chapter 7 (United States) into 23, to give a total of 231 thinkers; chapter 6 is devoted to metaphysics in Spain, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, and Russia, and here the paragraphs are devoted to each of the 5 countries, over a longer period of time; the final two chapters are devoted, respectively, to “Physiognomy and Mesmerism” (chapter 8) and “Phrenology” (chapter 9). The four volumes include a total of 630 thinkers, who each have a paragraph of variable length devoted to them.

follow them. For these and other reasons, I have adopted the order of time, as nearly as the nature of the subject would admit; leaving the reader, except in some few special cases, to select and classify writers according to his own opinions and judgment" (*ibid.*, I, pp. VI–VII). All of this gives the work – like all of Blakey's writings, since he always adopted this method of presentation – a confused encyclopaedic rather than a monographical character.

In his account, Blakey tries as far as possible to remain neutral. His sympathies, however, can be distributed equally between the Scottish school of 'common sense' and Locke, "the Father of the present modern system of British metaphysical philosophy". It is his constant concern to reconcile Locke with the Scots, who – according to him – misunderstood the meaning of the term 'idea' in Locke; thereby he intended to deliver the *Essay* from the sensationalistic and materialistic interpretation the French authors – from Condillac to Destutt de Tracy to Cabanis – had given of it¹³⁸; on this, therefore, he disagrees with Cousin, who had attributed the materialism of these French thinkers to the influence of Locke.¹³⁹

Philosophy can only be eclectic, but, unlike Cousin's claim, schools so far apart and different as those of Reid and Hegel cannot be forced to stay together (cf. IV, pp. 265–266). And yet, if we look at the history of philosophy, we cannot but register, in the long term, a slow progress of the true; if we look, for example, at more recent German philosophy, "we perceive a manifest change for better [...]: spiritualism is gradually becoming more material and materialism more spiritual; so that the absurdities from the extremes of both sources of inquiry will soon be obliterated by doctrines of a more intermediate and reconcilable complexion" (I, pp. LII–LIII).

Blakey's *History* in any case handsomely fulfilled its aim as a popularist work, and was judged favourably by the periodical press in Great Britain, on the Continent, especially in France and Italy, and in the United States.¹⁴⁰ In the years immediately following, Blakey published another two similar compilations, the first on the history of logic, and the second, which remained incomplete, on the history of political

¹³⁸ cf. *History of the Philosophy of Mind*, II, pp. 468–476 and 482–485; IV, pp. 5–8. Indeed, the same concern was also shared by Stewart, according to whom Locke, both in regard to the origin of ideas and to the nature of moral sense, "has been very grossly misapprehended or misrepresented by a large portion of his professed followers, as well as of his avowed antagonists" (*Dissertation*, pt. 2, pp. 223–239); cf. *Models*, II, pp. 603–604; E. Levi Mortera, *Dugald Stewart. Scienza della mente, metodo e senso comune* (Firenze, 2018), pp. 143–146.

¹³⁹ "[...] It is quite apparent to every attentive and candid reader, that he [Locke] speaks of reflection, not as a *passive* instrument, but an *active* and *creative* power. [...] The French philosopher [Cousin] has entirely misconceived Locke's theory on that matter" (*ibid.*, II, pp. 475–476); "the same inattention to Locke's meaning – continues Blakey a little further on – has induced a well known British philosopher, Dr. Whewell, to suppose that the author of the *Essay on the Human Understanding* has no correct conceptions of the nature of abstract propositions and axioms, but referred them to operations of sense as their cause" (*ibid.*, II, pp. 478–479); on Locke in the British historiography of the time see H. Aarsleff, 'Locke's Reputation in Nineteenth Century England', *The Monist*, LV, no. 3, Jul. 1971, pp. 392–422.

¹⁴⁰ cf. *Memoirs*, pp. 238–240; *Morning Post*, Nov. 25, 1848; *Literary Gazette*, no. 1662, Nov. 25, 1848, pp. 769–70; *Athenaeum*, no. 1113, Feb. 24, 1849, pp. 189–90; *Massachusetts Quarterly*, no. 6, March 1849, pp. 253–55; *Eclectic Review*, XXVIII, Jul. 1850, pp. 27–46.

thought¹⁴¹; the method used remained the same, but neither of them had the same success as his *History of the Philosophy of Mind*.

More interesting, also because it was decidedly more open to Continental philosophy, both French eclecticism and the more recent developments of German philosophy, was the text book published in 1846 by John Daniel Morell.¹⁴² In the preface to his most important work, Morell describes the phases of his philosophical

¹⁴¹ R. Blakey, *Historical Sketch of Logic, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Edinburgh: J. Nichol, 1851); cf. *Eclectic Review*, IV, no. 1113, Sep 1852, pp. 316–333 [in part. 321–329]; *Methodist Quarterly* [New York], XXXVIII, Oct. 1856, pp. 505–508; Id., *The History of Political Literature* (London: R. Bentley, 1855), 2 vols. In the two published works, the treatment gets as far as the year 1700; the third and fourth volume were not published, even though they were ready for printing (cf. *Memoirs*, p. 242).

¹⁴² J.D. Morell, *An Historical and Critical View of the Speculative Philosophy of Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Johnstone, 1846), 2 vols [I, pp. xxiv, 486; II, pp. 536]; 2nd edition, revised and enlarged, *ibid.* 1847 (from which we quote here), 2 vols [I, pp. xxii, 591; II, pp. 666]. This work enjoyed a considerable popularity (cf. *Athenaeum*, 1846, pp. 751–753); the complete text of the second London edition was reprinted (in one volume, pp. xviii, [19], 752) several times in the United States (New York: R. Carter & Brothers, 1848; 1849; 1851; 1853; 1856; 1858; 1862; 1872; 1878). Cf. also Morell, *On the Philosophical Tendencies of the Age; being four lectures delivered at Edinburgh and Glasgow in January 1848* (London: Johnstone, 1848). In the same period Morell also published an extensive essay on the meaning of the religious experience (*The Philosophy of Religion*, London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1849; New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1849), which aroused heated debate because of its rationalistic approach and its explicit reference to Schleiermacher. Of a more theoretical nature was his last major work concerning philosophical issues, the *Elements of Psychology*, Part I (London: W. Pickering, 1853), which was preceded, however, by a vast and interesting picture of the historical development of psychology as a science, where the author acknowledges his debts to Fries, Herbart, and especially Immanuel H. Fichte (pp. 3–38). Morell also edited the English edition of a work by I. H. Fichte (*Contributions to Mental Philosophy*, transl. and ed. by J.D. Morell, London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860). A few years before his death, Morell also published a collection of essays on Leibniz, Kant, and nineteenth-century German philosophy (*Philosophical Fragments: written during intervals of business*, London: Longmans and Co., 1878) and a *Manual of History of Philosophy; with numerous examination papers in mental science which have been set in the London University* (London: Stewart, 1884), pp. 595. The latter work is of a modest level; as concerns Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the author limits himself to quoting in full or summarizing passages from two manuals published over 30 years before by the Lutheran theologian Ludwig Noack (*Buch der Weltweisheit oder die Lehren der bedeutendsten Philosophen aller Zeiten*, vol. I: *Alterthum und Mittelalter*, Leipzig, 1851; *Geschichte der Philosophie in gedrängter Uebersicht*, Weimar, 1853), whereas as concerns modern philosophy he simply condenses his major work; however, the manual enjoyed a certain diffusion and was reprinted in 1886, 1888, and 1905.

education.¹⁴³ In London, at Homerton Academy, he had initially adhered to Locke's empiricism; disappointed, he then became a follower of Thomas Brown, who in 1820, with his *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, had tried to bring the doctrines of the Scottish school closer to some of the positions held by Hume and associationistic empiricism; Morell then moved from London to Glasgow, one of the centres of Scottish philosophy, and here, in the university where Adam Smith and Thomas Reid had taught, "[he] felt that there was a depth in the philosophy of Reid which [he] had not fully appreciated, and that the sensational tendency of the former [Brown] [...] was an ill exchange from the incipient spiritualism of the latter [Reid]"; at Glasgow, "hoping to probe the questions relating to the foundation of human knowledge more to their centre", he "attempted to read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and some few other Continental works", although he was unable to compare the results attained by the authors of these works, taken in their entirety, "with those of the Scottish metaphysicians"; he then went to Bonn, where "[he] heard [Christian August] Brandis and [Immanuel Hermann] Fichte expound German philosophy, and spent some months in reading the standard works of the great [German] masters. The different systems, which were here contending for the preference, gradually became intelligible; but, alas!, they stood alone, in complete isolation; to compare their method, their procedure, their aim, their results satisfactorily with those of English and Scottish philosophy, appeared, as yet, almost impossible. To gain light, therefore, upon these points, [he] turned [his] attention to France; the name of eclecticism seemed too inviting to be turned away, as it often is, on the charge of syncretism or want of profundity"; so he found, or thought he had found, "in the writings of Cousin, and others of the modern eclectics, the germs of certain great principles, upon which a comparison of all the philosophical systems of the present age could be advantageously instituted".¹⁴⁴

Morell's most important work, entitled *Historical and Critical View of the Speculative Philosophy of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, is a vast picture of the great nineteenth-century European currents of thought, which, in order to reconstruct their origin, goes back to encompass the whole modern age from the rebirth

¹⁴³ John Daniel Morell (1816–1891) was the son of a minister of the Congregational church, and nephew of Thomas Morell mentioned above; from 1833 to 1838 he studied at Homerton Academy (then located in London and affiliated to the University of London), one of the main colleges responsible for the education of the nonconformist clergy; from 1838 to 1841 he attended the University of Glasgow, where he completed his studies; subsequently he spent 1 year in Germany studying philosophy and theology in Bonn, where he attended the lessons held by C. A. Brandis and Immanuel Hermann Fichte; once back to England, he was ordained as a minister, and between 1846 and 1853 he published his major works on the history of philosophy; he was also charged with tutorial tasks at University College; in 1848 he was the first of the nonconformists to be appointed Inspector of Schools, a position in which he was active until 1876; he was the author of several school textbooks. On J.D. Morell, see R.M. Theobald, *Memorials of John Daniel Morell, Her Majesty Inspector of Schools* (London, 1891), and S. Brown, 'Morell, John Daniel', in *DNCBPh*, pp. 818–822. On another Morell, John Reynell, a cousin of John Daniel, who was a historian of philosophy too, see below note 153.

¹⁴⁴ Morell, *Historical and Critical View*, I, pp. VI–IX.

of letters up to the middle of the nineteenth century. Morell arranges the historical material by following Cousin. The numerous systems of philosophy are actually reduced to four, which follow one another over the course of history according to an almost constant order, each bringing its own part of truth and error: sensationalism, idealism, scepticism, and mysticism. Sensationalism – which in the modern age started with Bacon and then Locke, and continued with Hartley, Condillac, the Encyclopaedists, and then with Herder, the two Mills, Bentham, and Comte – and idealism, in its two variants: a subjective, spiritualistic idealism, which was open to transcendence and whose main representatives were initially Descartes and then Berkeley, Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, Reid, and Hamilton; and an objective, fundamentally pantheistic idealism, which had been adopted in the ancient age by the Eleatics and in the modern age by Spinoza and Hegel; these two forms of dogmatism are always followed in the history of philosophy by scepticism, which in the modern age corresponded to that of Hume, but also, in some elements of his system, to that of Kant himself; scepticism is opposed by mysticism – “in which the mind last of all takes refuge” – whose exponents in the modern age were Coleridge, in Great Britain, but especially Jacobi, to whose school and manifold influence Morell devotes ample space.¹⁴⁵ As is evident, the historiographical schemes are the same as those of Cousin, even though some new elements have been added, such as the distinction between spiritualistic and pantheistic idealism, the positive evaluation of ‘mysticism’, and greater caution in using Cousin’s classificatory categories.¹⁴⁶ As for the description and evaluation of the individual thinkers, in particular the German ones, from Leibniz to Kant, Fichte father, Jacobi, and Herbart, but also Schelling and Hegel, on the other hand, Morell reveals himself to be influenced by Fichte son and by Chalybäus, whose historical works he knew and used extensively.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 63–72; on Jacobi, see II, pp. 400–456.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, I, p. 71 note: “The reader who wishes to see these four tendencies [sensationalism, idealism, scepticism, mysticism] of the philosophic spirit more fully explained and proved by an appeal to the testimony of the universal history of philosophy, will find the whole question admirably treated in Victor Cousin’s *Cours de l’Histoire de la Philosophie*, Lectures IV. to XII”. But Morell also aims criticisms Cousin: “he has represented the four tendencies too much as four distinct philosophies existing in every age, rather than as so many prevailing influences or predispositions” (I, p. 71). He also speaks of “tendencies”, or “predispositions”, in the cycle of lessons held in 1848, in which the terminology partly changes: besides scepticism, we find “positivism” (cf. Morell, *On the Philosophical Tendencies of the Age*, pp. 9–48), replacing empiricism and sensationalism, “individualism” (pp. 49–87), partly replacing idealism, “traditionalism” (pp. 98–144), replacing mysticism, and the “philosophy of common sense” (pp. 145–93), which embraces eclecticism and spiritualistic idealism.

¹⁴⁷ I.H. Fichte, *Beiträge zur Charakteristik der neueren Philosophie, oder kritische Geschichte derselben von Descartes und Locke bis auf Hegel* (Sulzbach, 1841²); H.M. Chalybäus, *Historische Entwicklung der spekulativen Philosophie von Kant bis Hegel* (Dresden and Leipzig, 1839²): on I.H. Fichte and Chalybäus cf. *Models*, III, pp. 784–785. In the mid 1840s, probably as a result of the edition prepared by Fichte son, but above all of the spiritualistic and religious interpretation he had provided, William Smith translated into English a series of works by Fichte father, which were first published separately between 1844 and 1847, and then in a collection entitled *The Popular Works of Johann Gottlieb Fichte* (London: J. Chapman, 1848–49), 2 vols; other editions: 1873, 1877, 1889.

Although it was already known thanks to the close connections and mutual influences between the Scottish school and the French school inspired by Cousin, it was through Morell that an understanding of the history of modern thought offered by the French eclectics circulated and spread in England. And it was also through Morell that, for the first time, information arrived in England of a reading of Kant's philosophy which had initially met with little success even on the Continent - due to the preponderance of the developments of an idealistically oriented Kantianism - and which was emerging again in Germany precisely in those years, owing to the crisis of Hegelianism. The history of modern philosophy by Immanuel Hermann Fichte, whose theses were taken up by Morell, was highly critical of the idealistic-Hegelian developments of German philosophy: in the field of theology, against Hegelian immanentism, it maintained the personality and transcendence of God; in anthropology, against Hegel's "ideality of the finite", it claimed the autonomous reality of man as a finite being; as for the history of philosophy, it was certainly not conceived of as a "random aggregate of systems that follow on from one another", but nor was it viewed as a "rigorously necessary movement"; even within the framework of a concept of the organic and unitary development of philosophy, the personality of the philosopher had to be recognized an important place in the formation of the systems.¹⁴⁸ The figure of Immanuel H. Fichte had a relatively important role in the process by which mid-nineteenth-century British culture familiarised itself with German philosophy, and his influence is linked to the role that, a little later, Rudolph Hermann Lotze was to play in the direction of a spiritualist idealism.

Morell's historical production was relatively successful, and his major work was long used as a textbook by students at Oxford, Cambridge, St. Andrews, and many other British universities; it was also read and appreciated by outstanding exponents of British culture of opposing tendencies, such as George Eliot and Henry

¹⁴⁸cf. I.H. Fichte, *Beiträge zur Charakteristik* [1841], pp. iv-vi; cf. *Models*, III, pp. 784-785.

L. Mansel.¹⁴⁹ Morell, who remained fundamentally faithful to the tradition of the Scottish school, had the merit of linking this legacy to certain lines of thought from the Continent, which were closer or at least more comparable to it, like the spiritualistic tradition of French eclecticism and above all the personalistic and theistic developments of the latest German philosophy, which interpreted and developed Kantianism in a non-idealistic direction.¹⁵⁰ Thus, with his historiographical production, Morell contributed considerably to the formation of a stable tradition of thought, which was to develop throughout the nineteenth century, initially with the school of Hamilton and Mansel, and then also in the context of subsequent British idealism, which, as regards one of its important constituents was more influenced by Immanuel H. Fichte's and especially by Lotze's spiritualism than by Hegel, and – at least in the case of several of its exponents – was a spiritualistic, personalistic, and theistic rather than a Hegelian idealism.

¹⁴⁹ See the testimony of J.M.D. Meiklejohn, *Dr. Morell as a Philosopher*, in Theobald, *Memorials*, pp. 55–58. Morell's most important work was greatly appreciated by Mansel too, who in a letter to Morell himself dated 1862 wrote: "I owe you a debt of gratitude in many ways [...]. Your *History of Modern Philosophy* was the book that, more than any other, gave me a taste for philosophical study many years ago. And now, some 16 years after its publication, it remains, as far as I know, the best book on the subject that we have in English" (Theobald, *Memorials*, pp. 23–24). A strongly critical review appeared anonymously in the *Fraser's Magazine* (XXXIV, no. 202, Oct. 1846, pp. 407–415; no. 203, Nov. 1846, p. 630); the review, which is to be ascribed to G.H. Lewes, contains indeed a criticism of Cousin, of whom Morell professed to be a disciple: "Except the English writers, and Cousin and Jouffroy - we read in the review - there is no evidence whatever of [Morell's] having any direct acquaintance with the works of the philosophers treated in his pages"; Morell, observes the reviewer –takes all of his information, including quotations, from K.L. Michelet's *Geschichte* [1837–38], as concerns the German authors, and from the *Essai* [1828] by J. Ph. Damiron (a disciple of Cousin), as concerns the French authors; Morell, however, "never directly quotes these his authorities"; Morell is therefore accused of plagiarism (pp. 407–411). But the review contains a further remark which is of greater significance from the speculative point of view: taking up Cousin, Morell speaks of "five possible systems of philosophy – sensationalism, idealism, scepticism, mysticism, eclecticism", and, mindless of chronology, distributes philosophers within these five classes: "such a pellmell of dates and systems – such a violation of all historical order, was never seen before [...]. No man can escape the influences of his age. He inherits a vast amount of that which the labour of generations has stored up. But Mr. Morell writes as if a man were wholly isolated from such influences, as if, so long as he belonged to one class of thinkers, according to an arbitrary classification, he was only to be considered as a sensationalist absolute, and not the *heir of time*" (pp. 411–412); and, in support of his thesis the reviewer criticises the interpretation of Locke provided by Cousin, which Morell adopts and repropose (pp. 413–415); cf. C. König-Pralong, 'Une *French Theory* au XIX^e Siècle. L'éclectisme de Cousin en Grand-Bretagne et aux États-Unis d'Amérique', in *Une arme philosophique: l'éclectisme de Victor Cousin*, ed. by D. Antoine-Mahut and D. Whistler (Paris, 2019), pp. 111–124, in part. 119–123.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. R. Metz, *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, ed. by J.H. Muirhead (London, 1938), pp. 40–41; see also Robbins, *British Hegelians*, pp. 20–22.

In accordance with this tendency, a few years later the history of modern philosophy by Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus was translated into English.¹⁵¹ Chalybäus, who was close to the speculative positions of Fichte son, appreciated the ethical and theological aspect Kant's thought and devoted ample space to Jacobi; he interpreted the development of post-Kantian thought from a nondialectic perspective, and rehabilitated the figure of Fichte father, who held "the key for understanding all the latest systems of philosophy".¹⁵² Chalybäus' textbook was translated into English twice, both published in 1854. The edition published in Edinburgh is preceded by a short introductory note by William Hamilton (pp. v-vi), in which the Scottish philosopher expresses great appreciation for its general picture of the development of German philosophy. As in the case of Morell, the success enjoyed by Chalybäus' textbook in Great Britain can be explained by the fact that – first with Hamilton, as we have seen above, and then in Oxford with Hamilton's disciple Henry L. Mansel – through Jacobi's fideistic interpretation (which Chalybäus highly appreciated), Kant's philosophy had been evaluated apart from the idealistic developments it had undergone in Germany and, seen in connection with the Scottish philosophy of common sense, it had been used with apologetic religious purposes.

But the translation of Chalybäus' work was also intended to meet the new demand for student textbooks which, from the middle of the century onwards, became increasingly indispensable thanks to the reform of university curricula. Two years before, in 1852, John Reynell Morell had edited a new edition of Johnson's translation of Tennemann's *Grundriss*.¹⁵³ Morell went through Johnson's entire translation and completed it with all the parts of the 1829 edition that Johnson, partly for religious reasons, had left out. Morell takes into account the criticisms that Hamilton had made of Johnson two decades earlier, describing him as "wholly ignorant, even of the first letter in the alphabet of German philosophy". Now, observes Morell, things are different as "England has become familiar with the German mind"; in any case, however, in order to facilitate the reader, he added as a preface an essential "Vocabulary of some principal Kantian and other Metaphysical Terms" (*Manual*, pp. v-vi). This edition, which was intended to meet the new demand for student textbooks, was particularly successful, and was reprinted

¹⁵¹ H.M. Chalybäus, *Historical Survey of Speculative Philosophy, from Kant to Hegel* [...], translated from the fourth edition of the German, by A. Tulk (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1854); Id., *Historical Development of Speculative Philosophy, from Kant to Hegel*, from the German [...] by the Rev. A. Edersheim, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1854).

¹⁵² H.M. Chalybäus, *Historische Entwicklung* [1839²], p. 149.

¹⁵³ W. G. Tennemann, *A Manual of the History of Philosophy*, translated [...] by the Rev. A. Johnson, revised, enlarged, and continued by J[ohn] R[eynell] Morell (London: H.G. Bohn, 1852), and completed with all the parts of the 1829 edition missing from it; in addition, the editor added some paragraphs, taken from various sources, concerning the developments of philosophy in Germany (Schopenhauer, Strauss, Feuerbach), in England (Whewell, Hamilton, Coleridge), in France (Cousin, Comte, Fourier, Proudhon), in Italy (Mamiani, Gioberti, Rosmini), in Denmark (Oersted), in Holland (Wytttenbach, Hemsterhuis), and in America (Emerson, Parker); the work was reprinted several times (London: Bell & Daldy, 1867, 1870, 1873; London: Bell & Sons, 1878); cf. Micheli, 'Morell, John Reynell', in DNCBPh, p. 822.

several times. Only towards the middle of the 1880s the publisher, with a view to preparing a new edition, proposed that Ernest Belfort Bax could revise the manual; but “the amount of correction and alteration required” immediately revealed itself to be so great as to require rather the elaboration of “an entirely new volume on the subject”; the new volume appeared in 1886 and replaced Tennemann’s manual in the ‘Bohn’s Philosophical Library’.¹⁵⁴

Evidence of this new interest in the history of philosophy in the universities is the activity of William Archer Butler, who taught moral philosophy at Trinity College Dublin for about 10 years, from 1837 to 1848, when he died prematurely.¹⁵⁵ For a few years he lectured on the history of ancient philosophy, and his lectures appeared posthumously in two volumes. Sincerely religious, but also open-minded and tolerant, Butler did not manifest any definite philosophical convictions; as an Irishman with an Anglican father and a Catholic mother, brought up in the faith of his mother, but converted to the Anglican church, he viewed the history of philosophy as a means, on the one hand, to prove that the Christian faith is not reducible to human knowledge but transcends it, and, on the other, to bring about “tolerance and candour”, showing how in history truth and error always alternate and intermingle.¹⁵⁶ Butler had a good knowledge of the Greek and Latin classics but he did not know German; he made use of Brucker and the German historians of philosophy, Tennemann and Buhle, in French translations and he also read Ritter, whose work had recently been translated into English; but he mainly used French sources, Degérando and especially Cousin, with whom he agreed from a speculative point of view too. The historical account is preceded by a vast history of ancient and modern historiography of philosophy.¹⁵⁷

The history of ancient philosophy was also the object of the lectures held by James Frederick Ferrier at St. Andrews between 1845 and 1864, the year of his premature death. The neo-Hegelians considered him one of the first British idealists; in fact, although he was more or less acquainted with German thought from Kant to Hegel as a result of the studies he had conducted during his stay in Heidelberg in 1834, his “philosophy of consciousness” remains entirely within the tradition of the Scottish school, of which he criticises some aspects, such as its psychologism and the foundation of philosophy in terms of immediate certainty. Ferrier, who had

¹⁵⁴E. Belfort Bax, *A Handbook of the History of Philosophy for the use of students* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1886, 1908⁴); see *Mind*, XI (1886), pp. 433–436; *Contemporary Review*, L, Jul. 1886, pp. 604–605 (by Andrew Seth); *British Quarterly*, LXXXIII, no. 166, Apr. 1886, pp. 507–508; *Saturday Review*, LXI, no. 1589, Apr 10, 1886, p. 520; *Westminster Review*, CXXVI, no. 251, Jul. 1886, pp. 244–245; on Belfort Bax cf. S. Pierson, ‘Ernest Belfort Bax: 1854–1926. The Encounter of Marxism and Late Victorian Culture’, *Journal of British Studies*, XII (Nov. 1972), pp. 39–70; M. Bevir, ‘Ernest Belfort Bax: Marxist, Idealist, and Positivist’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* LIV, (1993), 1, pp. 119–135.

¹⁵⁵W. A. Butler, *Lectures on the History of Ancient Philosophy*, ed. from the Author’s MSS. with Notes, by W. Hepworth Thompson (Cambridge: Macmillan and Co., 1856), 2 vols. On William Archer Butler (c. 1814–1848), see T. Duddy, in *DNCBPh*, pp. 173–174.

¹⁵⁶Butler, *Lectures*, I, pp. 240–42.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, I, pp. 185–216.

been a pupil of William Hamilton, represents a rather typical example of how certain elements of the German tradition, which in his case mainly derive from J.G. Fichte and pertain to the theme of self-consciousness, were inserted into the framework of Scottish philosophy.¹⁵⁸ His *Lectures on Greek Philosophy* were published posthumously in 1866¹⁵⁹; the sources of the published texts are manuscripts dating from the last period of his teaching activity, from 1857 to 1862, but we cannot exclude the possibility that Ferrier himself also considered publishing the materials.

Without any clear concept of philosophy – writes Ferrier in his introductory notes – “the history of philosophy must remain a blank, a sealed book, a mere repertory of dead and unprofitable dogmas. But when we have once formed a right conception of philosophy, the study of its history will then be found to react powerfully in confirming and enlarging our knowledge, and in directing and enlightening our energies [...]. In studying the history of philosophy, we shall find that we are in fact studying only the development of our own reason in its most essential forms, with this difference, that the great problem which, in our minds, is worked out in a hurried manner, and within contracted limits, is evolved at leisure in the history of philosophy, and presented in juster and more enlarged proportions. The history of philosophy is in fact philosophy itself *taking its time*, and seen through a magnifying-glass”.¹⁶⁰ The task of the historian of philosophy is “to give a continuity or organised connection to the different parts of his narrative”, to grasp the “spirit [...] not merely the letter” of the doctrines of his predecessors, “to verify these doctrines in his own consciousness”, that is to say actively reproducing and realising them “in his own thoughts, together with the grounds on which they rest. He must be able to place himself in the mental circumstances in which they arose, and must observe them springing up in his own mind, just as they sprang up in the minds of those who originally propounded them. They must be to him, not the dead dogmas of *their* thinking, but the living products of *his own*”.¹⁶¹ These characteristics, observes Ferrier, cannot be found in the histories of philosophy written in the past, “in general mere repertoires of disjointed and exploded opinions, of capricious and arbitrary thoughts”, but only in those written recently; “the most diligent pioneers in this good work have been two German philosophers, Hegel and Zeller. But Hegel’s work on the history

¹⁵⁸ On Ferrier (1808–1864), see W.R. Sorley, *A History of English Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1920), pp. 283–286; Robbins, *The British Hegelians*, pp. 24–25; J. Keefe, ‘James Frederick Ferrier: The Return of Idealism and the Rejection of Common Sense’, in *Scottish Philosophy in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by G. Graham (Oxford, 2015), pp. 67–94; P. Ferreira, in DNCBPh, pp. 382–386. As regards the judgment formulated by the British idealists on Ferrier, see E.S. Haldane, *James Frederick Ferrier* (Edinburgh & London, 1899).

¹⁵⁹ J.F. Ferrier, *Lectures on Greek Philosophy, and other Philosophical Remains*, ed. by A. Grant and E.L. Lushington (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Sons, 1866), 2 vols; the history of Greek philosophy takes up volume 1; it was later reprinted, becoming the second volume of Ferrier’s *Philosophical Works* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Sons, 1875), from which we quote here.

¹⁶⁰ Ferrier, *Philosophical Works*, II, pp. 1–2.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 2–3.

of philosophy labours under the disadvantages incident to a posthumous publication [...]. Zeller's history on the Greek philosophy is in some respects more complete, and is indeed a very valuable work: but it is too much pervaded [...] by that obscurity which seems to be inseparable from the philosophical lucubrations of our Teutonic neighbours".¹⁶² These methodological rules are announced in the introduction but are not always respected in the realisation of the work. In the *Lectures*, the treatment of the history of ancient philosophy is developed unevenly: ample space is reserved for the pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, and also, although to a lesser extent, Aristotle, whereas very little space is given to Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Scepticism; the Neoplatonists are only briefly mentioned. The description refers exclusively to the original texts of the thinkers, which are quoted and discussed. The work was not very successful, partly because it was a mere outline, but it was appreciated, among others, by James Hutchison Stirling.¹⁶³

8.6 The Historiography of Philosophy of a Positivistic Orientation: George Henry Lewes

During the 1830s and the first half of the 1840s, a limited part of Hegel's philosophy started to be known in Great Britain, at least in the universities and cultivated circles, although mostly in an indirect way, via Cousin or French writers (see above note 119) who were hostile to Hegelianism, or even by way of some German thinkers who were for the most part critical of Hegelianism. Indeed, British culture's encounter with German philosophy was taking place in a period in which Hegelianism in Germany was already failing. But what was still lacking in Great Britain was direct knowledge of Hegel's writings and the great historiography of philosophy inspired by Hegelianism.

In Great Britain, the first to write on Hegel was George Henry Lewes, who published an important article on Hegel's philosophy of art in 1842¹⁶⁴; the article was written in 1841 and the author's intention was to send it to the most outstanding literary review of the time, *The Edinburgh Review*, but John Stuart Mill, who had read it, judged it to be too "German" for the publication, and gave the author the following advice: "In revising, it might be well to make it look as little German as

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, II, pp. 4–5.

¹⁶³ Cf. F.C.A. Schweglar, *Handbook of the History of Philosophy*, transl. and annotated by J.H. Stirling, 2nd edition (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1868), p. 346.

¹⁶⁴ G.H. Lewes, 'The Philosophy of Art: Hegel's Aesthetics', *British and Foreign Review*, XIII, no. 25. Jan. 1842, pp. 1–49. On the early reception of Hegel in Great Britain, see J. Bradley, 'Hegel in Britain: A Brief History of British Commentary and Attitude', *Heythrop Journal*, XX, (1979), 1–2, in particular pp. 1–24, and the well-documented essay by K. Wills, 'The Introduction and Critical Reception of Hegelian Thought in Britain: 1830–1900', *Victorian Studies*, XXXII (1988–1989), pp. 85–111.

possible".¹⁶⁵ In those years, Mary Ann Evans, known under the pseudonym of George Eliot, who later became Lewes' partner and found fame with her works of fiction, translated Strauss' *Leben Jesu* and another text which had anticipated the Biblical criticism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries - Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, which, however, was not published; a few years later she also translated Spinoza's *Ethica*, which remained unpublished too,¹⁶⁶ and finally, in the years that followed, she translated Feuerbach's *Wesen des Christentums*.¹⁶⁷ From the Anglicanism of her family and the severe Evangelicalism of her youth, George Eliot soon moved on to positions close to agnosticism and free thought; her translation of Strauss' work gave rise to several heated debates, thus greatly stimulating the study of Hegel, who was regarded as the source of inspiration for the theological and historical doctrines of the school of Strauss, which most people in Great Britain considered to be a menace to religious orthodoxy and moral principles.¹⁶⁸

Lewes, like George Eliot and others of his generation, had profited from the efforts made by Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle in particular to introduce German culture into Great Britain and have it esteemed by the British public; although he himself had always adopted positions close to agnosticism and free thought, and was therefore very critical of Coleridge's negative judgement on eighteenth-century empiricism, from the middle of the 1830s onwards, he approached with enthusiasm not only the most important works of German literature, in particular Goethe, of whom he was to become one of the most renowned biographers, but also the more recent philosophy of idealism. In 1838 Lewes undertook the first of his several journeys to Germany and was introduced to Hegel's philosophy, in particular his aesthetic theories. But by the mid 1840s, a little after the publication of the aforementioned article on Hegel's aesthetics, he became interested in Comte's

¹⁶⁵ J.S. Mill's letter to Lewes dated 24th April 1841, in J.S. Mill, *The Early Letters 1812 to 1848*, in *Collected Works*, XIII, p. 470; on Lewes' article cf. Ashton, *The German Idea*, pp. 112–126, and Id., *G.H. Lewes: A Life* (Oxford, 1991) pp. 37–40; cf. also E.S. Reed, *From Soul to Mind* (New Haven and London, 1997), pp. 145–157.

¹⁶⁶ D. F. Strauss, *The Life of Jesus critically examined* (London, 1846; 1882²: 1898³), 3 vols; the translation is made on the basis of the fourth German edition. The translation of Spinoza's *Tractatus*, which had perhaps been started even before that of Strauss' text, was probably not concluded, whereas in 1854 she completed the translation of the *Ethica*, which, however, she did not succeed in publishing.

¹⁶⁷ L. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. From the 2nd ed., by M. Evans (London: Chapman, 1854; 1881²; 1893³; repr. New York: C. Blacard, 1855).

¹⁶⁸ In Britain, during the 1840s and in the early 1850s, the more cultivated public did not encounter Hegel's thought, so to speak, 'in a raw state', but within an intricate context of connections with other aspects of German culture, which were perhaps of even greater significance for the average reader, such as literature, aesthetic theories, philology and linguistics, the historical sciences, and especially theology and Biblical criticism; in the period in which it came into contact with Hegel's philosophy, British culture was itself going through deep changes to the religious field – as a result of the crisis of the eighteenth-century Anglican tradition and of the conflict between 'Tractarianism', the Evangelical current, and the liberalism of the so-called 'Broad Church' – as well as to the political field, with the establishment and consolidation of liberalism, and, finally, to the field of the educational institutions themselves, with a gradual process of reform of university teaching, which was in part the result of a comparison with German universities, in particular the Prussian ones, which were taken as models for professionalization also in the domain of the humanities and for the leading position assigned to scientific research (cf. G. Haines, *Essays on German Influence upon English Education and Science: 1850–1919*, pp. 21–46).

philosophy and soon started to support him fervently; like Stuart Mill and George Eliot, towards the middle of the 1850s, after Comte's mystical and religious change, Lewes was to depart from Comte, but not from positivism.¹⁶⁹ His conversion to positivism, however, never extinguished his interest in German culture and philosophy.¹⁷⁰

This is also evident in the very successful history of philosophy Lewes published in London (four volumes in a small format) between 1845 and 1846, which certainly drew inspiration from Comte's positive philosophy, but in some respects, on account of its markedly unitary and organicistic view of the historical development of philosophy, also from Hegel.¹⁷¹ The title of the work, *A Biographical History of Philosophy*, appears to be misleading; the text does not deal with the lives of the

¹⁶⁹ "The foundation of a comprehensive Method is the great achievement of Comte, as it was of Bacon, and the influence he has exercised, and must continue to exercise, will be almost exclusively in that direction. Over his subsequent efforts to found a social doctrine, and to become the founder of a new religion, let us draw the veil" (G.H. Lewes, *The Biographical History*, London, 1857, p. 662); on the relationship between Lewes and Comte, cf. G. Lanaro, 'George Henry Lewes fra Comte e Mill: un episodio nella storia del positivismo britannico', *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, XCIII (1988), pp. 77–102.

¹⁷⁰ On George Henry Lewes (1817–1878), see R. Ashton, *G.H. Lewes. A Life* (Oxford, 1991); Id., *The German Idea*, pp. 105–146. During a later period of his life, Lewes devoted himself to studies on the philosophy of the mind, psychology, and psychobiology and published several works, among which *The Physiology of Common Life* (Edinburgh and London, 1859–1860, 2 vols), which influenced Pavlov and his discovery of conditioning, and *The Problems of Life and Mind* (London, 1874–1879, 5 vols). Concerning his contributions to the field of the philosophy of the mind, cf. J. Kaminsky, 'The Empirical Metaphysics of George Henry Lewes', *Journal of the History of Ideas* XIII (1952), pp. 314–332; with reference Lewes' intense and lifelong activity as a literary journalist, see A.R. Kaminsky, *George Lewes as a Literary Critic* (Syracuse, NY, 1968).

¹⁷¹ G.H. Lewes, *A Biographical History of Philosophy* (London: C. Knight & Co., 1845–1846, 4 vols [pp. 239, 256, 232, 264], from which we quote here; repr. London: Cox, 1851, 4 vols; new edition entitled *The Biographical History of Philosophy, from its origins in Greece down to the present day* [...], Library edition, much enlarged, and thoroughly revised (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1857), pp. v–xxxv, 675 [another edition, identical to the London edition but with a different numbering of pages: New York: A. Appleton, 1857, pp. iii–xxxiv, 801]. In the third edition, which does not differ much from that of 1857, the title has changed: *The History of Philosophy from Thales to Comte* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1867), 2 vols [pp. v–cxv, 407; pp. 663]. The following edition (the fourth) was published, in two volumes, by the same publisher in London in 1871. The fifth edition (from which we quote here) was published in London (Longmans, Green, and Co.) in 1880, 2 vols, [pp. v–cxiv, 410; v–x, 773]. In the text of the third edition, the *History* was also translated into German (Leipzig, 1871; 1873–1876²) and into Hungarian (Pest, 1876–1878). But the first edition, preserving the original title, proceeded autonomously and was reprinted several times: 1867, 1868, 1871, 1872, 1880, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1900, 1902. In the early 1860s Lewes undertakes a vast history of science; he begins with the study on Aristotle's scientific works and in 1864 publishes *Aristotle, a Chapter from the History of Science, including analyses of Aristotle's scientific writings* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1864; German transl. by Julius Victor Carus, Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1865): "The origin and development of Science are questions of high interest [...]. I have been for many years preparing myself to attempt a sketch of the Embryology of Science, so to speak – an exposition of the great *momenta* in scientific development; and the present volume is the first portion of such an exposition, which I publish separately because in itself it forms a monograph, and because I may never live to complete the larger scheme. As a monograph it has not, I believe, been forestalled. Numerous and exhaustive as are the works devoted to Aristotle's moral and metaphysical writings, there is not one which attempts to display, with any fullness, his scientific researches" (*Ibid.*, p. viii).

philosophers but is a “biography of philosophy”: “There have been numerous histories of philosophical schools: some of these learned and laborious chronicles being little more than a collection of fragments and opinions; others critical estimates of various systems; and others attempting to unite both of these plans. But the rise, growth, and development of Philosophy, as exhibited in these philosophical schools, - in a word, the Life of Philosophy, - has yet, I believe, had no biographer”.¹⁷² This work, he observes, is of limited extent, not because the materials were lacking, “but because only what was deemed essential has been selected [...]. It is no complete list of names that figure in the annals of philosophy; it is no complete collection of miscellaneous opinions preserved by tedious tradition. Its completeness is an *organic* completeness [...]. Only such thinkers have been selected as represent the various phases of progressive development; and only such opinions as were connected with those phases. I have written the Biography, not the Annals, of Philosophy”.¹⁷³ The philosophy whose history is outlined here is metaphysics, and the object of the work is to show “how and by what steps Philosophy became Positive Science”.¹⁷⁴ The historical development is necessary; Lewes firmly believes “in a direct filiation of ideas [...]; the curious but erroneous speculations of the Greeks were necessary to the production of modern science. It is our belief that there is a direct parentage between the various epochs; a direct parentage between the ideas of the ancient thinkers and the ideas of moderns [...]. Philosophy and Positive Science are irreconcilable [...]. Philosophy (metaphysical philosophy, remember!) aspires to the knowledge of *Essences* and *Causes*. Positive Science aspires only to knowledge of *Laws*. The one pretends to discover *what things are* in themselves [...]. The other only wishes to discover their *modus operandi* [...]. Philosophy and Positive Science are both Deductive [...]. Philosophy is deductive *a priori* [...]. Positive Science is deductive *a posteriori* [...]. The origin of Positive Science is to be sought in Philosophy [...]. The position occupied by Philosophy in the History of Humanity, is that of the great Initiative to Positive Science [...]. We cannot mistake the legible characters of History [...]. Long after Astronomy had been a science, accepted by all competent investigators, Astrology had still its individual votaries. Long after Chemistry had become a science, Alchemy still tempted many [...]. But as these individual errors do not affect the general proposition

¹⁷² Lewes, *Biographical History*, I, p. 3.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 6.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 12. The use of the term ‘philosophy’ to designate ‘metaphysics’ alone, which refers explicitly to Hegel’s polemic against the use of the term ‘philosophy’ in English (cf. Lewes, *Biographical History*, III, p. 6 note), immediately provoked bitter controversy: “[...] Mr. Lewes still persists, on continental authorities, in using the word ‘Philosophy’ as designating metaphysics only, and ridicules the English notion that the instruments employed in the laboratory and observatory are philosophical, and Newton a philosopher. He never permits himself to suspect that the English may, after all, be right in using the word ‘philosophy’ as expressive of the antecedent unity of which physics and metaphysics are the dual developments, and which may *both* be properly, as well as popularly, called sciences: the one a science of principles and the other a science of facts. To suppose otherwise, indeed, is clearly an assumption” (*Athenaeum*, no. 965, Apr. 25, 1846, p. 422; see also *ibid.*, no. 925, July 19, 1845, p. 715).

respecting the wondrous and progressive march of Science, so also the individual metaphysicians, however eminent, form no real exception to the general proposition, that Philosophy has gradually been displaced by Positive Science, and will finally disappear".¹⁷⁵ This work, he continues, has a particular feature "which distinguishes it from all others on the subject: the peculiarity of being a History of Philosophy, by one who firmly believes that Philosophy is an impossible attempt, that it never has had any certitude, never can have any".¹⁷⁶

The historical description concentrates on Greece, from Thales to Proclus, and on modern Europe, from Bacon, the father of positive science, and Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, up to Hegel, the last metaphysician, and Comte, the Bacon of the nineteenth century. The history of philosophy starts with the Greeks. Oriental peoples are left out because "it is very questionable whether the East had any Philosophy distinct from its Religion; and still more questionable whether Greece was materially influenced by it"; Rome is also excluded: "the Romans, confessedly, had no philosophy of their own; and did but feebly imitate that of the Greeks".¹⁷⁷ According to Lewes, ancient philosophy "ceased" with Proclus because it was with him that "Religion, and Religion only, was capable of affording satisfactory answers to the questions which perplexed the human race, and Philosophy was reduced to the subordinate office which the Alexandrians had consigned to the Aristotelian Logic. Philosophy became the servant of Religion, but no longer reigned in its own right. Thus was the circle of Endeavour completed. With Thales, Reason separated itself from Faith; with the Alexandrians the two were again united".¹⁷⁸ The medieval age is therefore excluded from the history of philosophy: "ancient Philosophy expired with Proclus. Those who came after him, although styling themselves philosophers, were in truth - observes Lewes giving the reasons for this exclusion - Religious Thinkers employing philosophical formulae". As for medieval thought, Lewes continues, we usually speak of 'Christian philosophy': "yet Christian philosophy is an absurd misnomer. A Christian may be also a Philosopher; but to talk of Christian Philosophy is to abuse language"; indeed, 'Christian philosophy' means that "the solution of metaphysical problems" is founded on Christian principles, which are "*revealed* to us [...] because inaccessible to Reason [...]. But the very essence of Philosophy consists in pure Reason, as

¹⁷⁵ Lewes, *Biographical History*, I, pp. 12–19 (see also *Athenaeum*, no. 926, July 26, 1845, p. 745).

¹⁷⁶ Lewes, *Biographical History*, I, p. 22.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 12–13.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, II, p. 220.

the essence of Religion is Faith. There cannot, consequently, be a Religious Philosophy: it is a contradiction in terms".¹⁷⁹

Ancient philosophy ends therefore with Proclus, who concludes the line of thought which had begun with Thales, while modern philosophy only starts with Descartes, with whom "Reason again definitely separated itself from Faith, and Philosophy once more endeavoured to solve its problems for itself".¹⁸⁰ If, together with Hegel, we understand philosophy as metaphysics, then Descartes can be defined as "the father of modern philosophy"; in the early modern age, we also find Bacon and his work, but he is rather the father of the modern science of nature; indeed, unlike the ancient world, during the modern age "Metaphysics and Physics, first stood up openly, manfully against each other: consequently it is at this epoch of our history that the ambiguous nature of the term Philosophy becomes most apparent. When Physics were jumbled with Metaphysics, or received metaphysical explanations, there was no impropriety in designating all man's speculations by the name of Philosophy"; yet, once the separation has taken place, it is appropriate that we should avoid confusions and designate each discipline with its name: the history of philosophy must therefore be understood in its more peculiar meaning of the history of metaphysics, and "now, properly speaking, in such a work Bacon has no place. Neither his speculations nor his method have anything in common with those of Philosophers [...]. The influence he exercised over succeeding generations has been that of a steady opposition to all speculations not comprised within the sphere

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 222–223 (cf. also *Id.*, *The History*, I, pp. 407–409). And he adds: "Philosophy may be occupied about the same problems as Religion: but it employs altogether different Methods, and depends on altogether different principles. Religion may, and should, call in Philosophy to its aid; but, in so doing, it assigns to Philosophy only the subordinate office of illustrating, reconciling, or applying its dogmas. This is not a Religious Philosophy: it is Religion *and* Philosophy; the latter stripped of its boasted prerogative of deciding for itself, and allowed only to employ itself in reconciling the decisions of Religion and of Reason. From these remarks it is obvious that our History, being a narrative of the progress of Philosophy only, will not include any account of the so-called Christian Philosophy, because that is a subject strictly belonging to the History of Religion" (Lewes, *Biographical History*, II, pp. 223–224; cf. also *The History*, I, pp. 409–410). From the fourth edition (1871) onwards, Lewes added a part devoted to medieval philosophy (Lewes, *The History*, II, pp. 1–89) where he concentrated with particular attention, however, on those thinkers, or schools, who had contributed to direct speculation toward a distinction between philosophy and theology, as in the case of Abelard (pp. 13–32), or to the spread of scientific culture, as in the cases of Arabic philosophy (pp. 33–70) and Roger Bacon (pp. 77–87).

¹⁸⁰ Lewes, *Biographical History*, II, p. 224; cf. also III, p. 87. On the divorce between theology and philosophy carried out by Descartes, he writes: "Descartes [...] was not less [than Bacon] emphatically opposed to the theological spirit. He disengaged Philosophy from Theology by treating it as an independent topic, and by treating it on a Method which was in its essence destructive of all Theology, for it proceeded on a basis of absolute Doubt. The reign of Authority was proclaimed at an end. All the notions, all the hypotheses, all the beliefs which had filled the perplexed soul were to be ejected, and a new beginning was to be made from absolute Doubt, nothing accepted till it was proved, nothing proved by authorities, but all by reason. The clearance here was more than a clearance from scholastic argumentation and Aristotelian tradition, it was a sweeping away of all Authority whatever, succeeded by installation of Reason as supreme arbiter" (*Id.*, *The History*, II, pp. 117–118).

of physics. His title, his great and glorious title, is that of Father of Experimental Philosophy, Father of Positive Science. There is no gainsaying this. And yet it would seem preposterous to leave out Bacon from our history [...]. The peculiar object of our work being to trace the various Methods by which the human mind ‘was enabled to conquer for itself, in the long struggle of centuries, its present modicum of certain knowledge’, we could not pass over the great attempt of Bacon to found that Method”.¹⁸¹

Modern philosophy concludes its cycle with Kant, whose “investigation of the elements of Thought” proves to be “nothing less than a scientific basis for Scepticism” in its different forms, as is evident from the fruitless outcomes of post-Kantian philosophy.¹⁸²

Within each of the two greater cycles into which the history of philosophy is subdivided - the ancient cycle and the modern cycle - the vicissitudes of philosophical (that is, metaphysical) reason recur according to a perpetually similar and fruitless scheme.¹⁸³ The only difference between the ancient and the modern world is represented by “the progressive development of positive science, which in ancient speculations occupied the subordinate rank, and which now [in the modern age] occupies the highest”; but otherwise there is a “reproduction of all the questions which agitated the Greeks, and that too in a similar course of development. Not only are the questions similar, but their evolution are so”.¹⁸⁴ In the ancient age, the different and opposing doctrines of the Ionians, the Eleatics, and the Pythagoreans concerning the origin of the universe, followed by the first attempts – by Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Democritus – to settle the problem of nature and that of the origin of knowledge, led to Gorgias’ nihilism, to Protagoras’ phenomenism, in a word, to the scepticism of the Sophists; after the Socratic reaction to the Sophists, even Platonic idealism and Aristotelian experimentalism and inductivism “ended in the Sceptics, the Stoics, and the New Academy: that is, in Scepticism, Common Sense, and Scepticism again”; in the modern age, Descartes and Spinoza’s innatistic rationalism and Hobbes and Locke’s empiricism “ended in Berkeley,

¹⁸¹ Lewes, *Biographical History*, III, pp. 5–7; cf. also Id., *The History*, II, pp. 115–119.

¹⁸² Lewes, *Biographical History*, IV, p. 97; as regards his final judgement on Kant seen as a cause of scepticism, see IV, pp. 134–135: “Kant was not a sceptic, but he deceived himself in supposing that his system was any safeguard from Scepticism. The veracity of Consciousness, which he had so laboriously striven to establish, and on which his Practical Reason was based, is only a relative, subjective veracity. Experience is the only basis of knowledge; and Experience, we know, leads to Scepticism”; see also Id., *The History*, II, pp. 469–470, 517–518.

¹⁸³ Lewes, *The History*, I, pp. xxvi–xxvii: “Metaphysical Philosophy has been ever in movement, but the movement has been circular; and this fact is thrown into stronger relief by contrast with the linear progress of Science. Instead of perpetually finding itself, after years of gigantic endeavour, returned to the precise spot from which is started, Science finds itself, year by year, and almost day by day, advancing step by step, each accumulation of power adding to the momentum of its progress [...]. While the first principles of Metaphysical Philosophy are to this day as much a matter of dispute as they were 2000 years ago, the first principles of Science are securely established, and form the guiding lights of European progress”.

¹⁸⁴ Lewes, *Biographical History*, IV, pp. 263–264.

Hume, Reid, and Kant: that is, in Idealism, Scepticism, Common Sense, and Scepticism again".¹⁸⁵ In the ancient world, "these inquiries terminating thus fruitlessly, a new and desperate spring was made in Alexandria: reason was given up for ecstasy; this resolved philosophy into religion. In Germany a similar spectacle presents itself; and Schelling has, in his final stage, identified philosophy with religion. Thus has philosophy completed its circle, and we are left in this nineteenth century precisely at the same point at which we were in the fifth!"¹⁸⁶

But we should not be deceived by the failures of philosophy: "the history of philosophy may be the history of errors; it is not that of follies. All the systems that have appeared have had a pregnant meaning. Only for this could they have been accepted. The meaning was proportionate to the opinions of the epoch, and as such is worth penetrating"¹⁸⁷; indeed, if from the point of view of contents metaphysics has failed and no problem has been solved, then from the point of view of method there has been a gradual progress: in the course of history, the empirical or inductive method, the mathematical or deductive method, the subjective or synthetic or speculative method, and the dialectic method have all been put to the test, abandoned, taken up again, and this has served to prepare the positive method, which is basically the method of science.¹⁸⁸ Other advances have been made in the field of ethics or of politics, with Socrates for example, and then especially with Christianity, but Lewes does not deal with ethics since this discipline is not included under his concept of metaphysics.¹⁸⁹

Lewes' history of philosophy enjoyed great success; it saw several editions and countless reprints; it was widely circulated abroad too and was even translated into German.¹⁹⁰ The work is written in a clear style, and it was – at least its first edition which, as was said above, proceeded autonomously and was reprinted several times – "addressed to the general public rather than to well-read students, it had not pretensions to the completeness or erudition displayed in many others Histories,

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 263. On the parallel between ancient Stoicism and the Scottish school of 'common sense', and between the Stoic criterion of evidence, as opposed to the ancient Sceptics, and the unbeatable power of common sense, which the Scottish philosophers contrasted with Hume: "[...] the Stoics, combating the Scepticism of their age, were reduced to the same strait as Reid, Beattie, and Hutcheson, combating the Scepticism of Hume: reduced to give up Philosophy, and to find refuge in *Common Sense*. The battle fought by the Stoics is very analogous to the battle fought by the Scotch philosophers, in the ground occupied, in the instruments employed, and in the enemy attacked, and the object to be gained. They both fought for Morality, which they thought endangered" (*ibid.*, II, p. 159).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 263–264.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, I, p. 28. This observation refers to Thales, whose doctrine ("the principle of all things was water") should not at all be considered a "mere extravagance"; indeed, according to Lewes, this applies to all systems of the past.

¹⁸⁸ On method, see in particular Lewes, *The History*, I, pp. XXXI–LX; on the progress made in this field, see *Biographical History*, II, p. 221.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Lewes, *Biographical History*, II, p. 222.

¹⁹⁰ See above, note 171; on the reception of the work cf. Ashton, *G.H. Lewes: a Life*, pp. 49–50, 172–173, 265–266, and 279.

being little more than a rapid survey of the course of metaphysical speculation, written with the avowed purpose”, as Lewes wrote referring explicitly to the work’s first edition, “of dissuading the youth of England from wasting energy on insoluble problems, and relying on a false Method. With this object of turning the mind from Metaphysics to Positive Philosophy, it employed History as an instrument of Criticism to disclose the successive failures of successive schools”.¹⁹¹

In the subsequent editions, the chapters devoted to individual authors were considerably enlarged and the work assumed a more scholarly character; from the third edition onwards (1867), the work was complemented by an introductory theoretical essay on the nature of philosophy, but the fundamental approach remained unchanged. In his treatment, Lewes deliberately concentrates above all on the great thinkers: as he repeatedly points out, he has written the ‘history’, not the ‘annals’, of philosophy, hence he deals with Descartes and not with his school, with Kant and not with the Kantians, and so forth.¹⁹²

In an article of 1878 describing the intellectual figure of Lewes, Frederic Harrison, a nonacademic follower of Comte’s positivism and a sensitive observer of the British philosophical and scientific culture of the Victorian age, underlines the importance of the objects of research to which Lewes devoted the final part of his life, in particular his studies on the biological foundations of psychology and his theory of psychological automatisms; but, Harrison observes, these studies aroused the interest of a limited number of specialists, whereas the broader public was rather impressed by Lewes’ early works, in particular his *History of Philosophy*, “which has acted on the mind of [his] generation almost more than any single book except Mr. Mill’s *Logic*”.¹⁹³ Spencer too admitted that he had been influenced by this work: as he writes in his *Autobiography*, the reading of Lewes’s book not only made him “acquainted with the general course of philosophical thought”, but also gave him

¹⁹¹ Lewes, *The History*, I, pp. vi-vii.

¹⁹² Cf. Lewes, *Biographical History*, III, p. 3.

¹⁹³ “I have insisted especially on the importance of Mr. Lewes’ last three volumes [i.e. on psychology] because far too much attention has been given to his early and popular works, which, however fit to found a great reputation in literature, cannot be compared in power, ripeness, and depth to his latest works. Even the *History of Philosophy*, which has acted on the mind of this generation almost more than any single book except Mr. Mill’s *Logic*, is a work of literature rather than of philosophy, being an admirable piece of synthetic criticism and exposition, not a system of constructive doctrine” (F. Harrison, ‘Obituary: G.H. Lewes’, *Academy*, XIV, no. 344 [n.s.], Dec. 7, 1878, p. 543).

“an increased interest in psychology, and an interest, not before manifest, in philosophy at large”.¹⁹⁴

On the contrary, in the academic world, Lewes’ history of philosophy never received a truly favourable reception, not even in its enlarged version, partly because in British universities, during the second half of the century, neo-idealism gradually became dominant, but not only for this reason. Henry Sidgwick, for example, who was himself linked to the utilitarian and empiricist tradition, wrote a review of the fourth edition of the work in 1871, in which while appreciating its literary qualities he criticised its fundamental approach: “the defects of the work”, Sidgwick writes, “are due in a great measure to the author’s own philosophical position. In its original form it might fairly have been entitled ‘An essay on the Futility of Metaphysical Enquiry, illustrated by studies of the most eminent historical examples’. And though in each succeeding edition we find the unhappy metaphysicians treated with more and more respect: still the interval that divides many of them from their historian is too vast to be crossed even by his vivacious and versatile sympathy”; and Sidgwick continues: Lewes “gives always a clear and vivid presentation of certain aspects or portions of each system that he describes: he sometimes reaches with rapid penetration its centre, and contrives to look at it from within: but he cannot, in the case of the profounder thinkers, maintain himself at this point of view: and is always liable to lapse suddenly into a manner of thought quite alien to that which he is trying to represent”, as is evident from the treatment – however revised and enlarged in the last edition – of the theories of Descartes, Berkeley, and above all of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ “A more important result, however, was that I read [Lewes’] *Biographical History of Philosophy*, then existing in its original four-volumed form, in the series of shilling volumes published by Knight, who was one of the pioneers of cheap literature [...]. Up to that time questions in philosophy had not attracted my attention [...]. I doubt not that the reading of Lewes’s book, while it made me acquainted with the general course of philosophical thought, and with the doctrines which throughout the ages have been the subjects of dispute, gave me an increased interest in psychology, and an interest, not before manifest, in philosophy at large; at the same time that it served, probably, to give more coherence to my own thoughts, previously but loose” (H. Spencer, *Autobiography*, London, 1904, I, pp. 378–379).

¹⁹⁵ H. Sidgwick, Review of: Lewes, *The History of Philosophy* (4th edition), *Academy*, II, no. 14, Nov. 15, 1871, pp. 519–521 (now in *The Works of Henry Sidgwick*, vol. XV: *Reviews 1871–1899*, London, 1996, pp. 1–9).

8.7 The Introduction of Hegel into Great Britain: Benjamin Jowett and Idealistic Historiography

As for Hegel, however, he was first introduced into Great Britain thanks to Benjamin Jowett, who, in this regard, played a more decisive role than James Hutchinson Stirling, and much before him.¹⁹⁶ A theologian of a liberal orientation and a biblical

¹⁹⁶On the origins of the neo-Hegelian movement in Great Britain and on Jowett's role, see the testimony of an epigone of Oxonian idealism, John Alexander Smith, 'The Influence of Hegel on the Philosophy of Great Britain', in *Verhandlungen des ersten Hegelkongresses vom 22. bis 25. April, 1930 im Haag* (Tübingen and Haarlem, 1931), pp. 61–62: "The seat, or at least the first seat, of this movement [i.e. the British 'neo-Hegelian' movement] was the University of Oxford, and the conduct of it, so far as it was a concerted or cooperative movement, was in the hands of a small group of teachers there. They were all students who came up in the late fifties or early sixties, and remained as teachers. Almost all of them were pupils of Benjamin Jowett, the well-known translator of Plato. [...] At first he [Jowett] found great help in the Lectures on the History of Philosophy [by Hegel], but could not be satisfied that what he found in them was genuinely history because it 'saw Hegelianism everywhere'. Still he persevered: 'One must go on', he wrote, 'or give up metaphysics altogether'. [...] He also occupied his mind with works on New Testament Criticism, and engaged in much theological and ecclesiastical controversy. Here, as in ancient Philosophy, he was evidently guided by Hegel and the Hegelians. He continued to lay great stress on Hegel's services to the history of Philosophy, and reiterated his conviction that Hegel 'had done more to explain Greek thought than all other writers together' [...]" A careful reconstruction of the Oxford academic world and of the use of Hegel made by Jowett as a historian of ancient philosophy, is also contained in D. Brown, *Hopkins' Idealism. Philosophy, Physics, Poetry* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 146–155, 167–168, and 189–190. As for J.H. Stirling, to whose work *The Secret of Hegel: being the Hegelian System in Origin, Principle, Form and Matter*, 2 vols (London 1865, 1897²), the beginnings of British idealism are commonly traced back (cf. for example Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition*, pp. 164–171; Id., 'How Hegel came to England', *Mind*, XXXVI, 1927, pp. 423–447), his role should not be overrated (cf. Metz, *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, pp. 259–268); in fact, the British idealists never accepted him as one of themselves, and he never succeeded in holding a university chair. Between 1852 and 1859, Augusto Vera was also active in London, where he had moved from Paris: Vera certainly performed an important role in the European circulation of Hegelianism; but, as for the early knowledge of Hegel in Great Britain, his influence seems to have been limited. His *Introduction à la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris, 1855) and his translation of the first part of the *Encyclopaedia* (*Logique de Hegel*, Paris, 1859; the translation of the remaining parts ensued his stay in London) appeared in French in Paris. Vera, however, also published a philosophical essay in London in which he established a connection between certain debates within the Scottish school and Hegel's philosophy (*An Inquiry into Speculative and Experimental Science, with special reference to Mr. Calderwood and Professor Ferrier's recent publications, and to Hegel's doctrine*, London, 1856). In 1855 an English translation was published (*The Subjective Logic of Hegel*, transl. by H. Sloman and J. Wallon, revised by a Graduate of Oxford, London: Chapman, 1855) of a work which had come out in France a year earlier (*La logique subjective de Hegel*, traduite par H. Sloman et J. Wallon, suivie de quelques remarques par H.S.[loman], Paris: Ladrangé, 1854); more than a translation, it was a simple and not always faithful compendium of the first section of the third book of the *Wissenschaft der Logik* (cf. G. Jarczyk and P.-J. Labarrière, *De Kojève à Hegel*, Paris, 1996, p. 21; A. Bellantone, *Hegel en France*, Paris, 2011, vol. I, pp. 325–326). But the first of Hegel's works to be translated into English were the *Vorlesungen* on the philosophy of history, which was certainly able to illustrate the breadth of Hegel's conception of history (*Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, transl. by J. Sibree, London: H.G. Bohn, 1857, 1861; 1881²). As for Hegel's system, it was only in 1874 that William Wallace, a pupil of Jowett, translated the first part of the *Encyclopaedia* (*The Logic of Hegel*, transl. from the *Encyclopaedia* [...], with prolegomena, by W. Wallace, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1874; 1892²), to which, 20 years later, he added the translation of the third part of the *Encyclopaedia* (*Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, transl. From the *Encyclopaedia* [...], with five introductory essays, by W. Wallace, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894).

exegete, Jowett was involved in the movement to reform the English universities; his fame is due above all to his studies on Plato, and he was responsible for the most renowned English translation of Plato's works. Like other intellectuals, Jowett initially encountered Hegel's rationalism and Hegelian dialectic through their application to the fields of the history of philosophy, Biblical criticism, and theology. From 1842 to 1849 he made numerous study tours through Germany, where in 1844 he came into contact with Johann Eduard Erdmann, a historian of philosophy of a Hegelian tendency, which served to increase his interest in Hegel, and in 1845 he started to translate the *Lesser Logic* and the *Philosophy of Right*. He translated most of the *Logic*, and if he had completed it, it would have been the first English translation of a work by Hegel.¹⁹⁷ Still in 1845 he read Hegel's *Vorlesungen* on the history of philosophy, and from the following year onwards – and for each semester for the following 50 years – he started to lecture on the history of philosophy, especially on the pre-Socratics and Plato, using Hegel's text; subsequently he also gave courses on modern philosophy and on Hegel, passing on to his students that interest in German idealism which would later be the starting point of English idealism.¹⁹⁸ At Balliol College he had among his pupils all of the most outstanding exponents of English idealism, from Bernard Bosanquet to Edward Caird, Thomas Hill Green, David George Ritchie, and William Wallace.

Jowett did not publish much on Hegel, but there are copious references to Hegel in his introductions to the Platonic dialogues, especially in the introductory essay to the *Sophist*. However, it was especially in his teaching activity that he handed down to entire generations of young students his interest in the history of Greek philosophy and in Hegel's method and historiographical theses. In the course of time, Jowett was to depart from what he considered to be the metaphysical aspects of the Hegelian system and emphasised above all their usefulness from the point of view of method. Hegel's system – he wrote in his introduction to the *Sophist* – “frees the mind from the domination of abstract ideas. We acknowledge his originality [...]. No other thinker has ever dissected the human mind with equal patience and minuteness. He has lightened the burden of thought [...]. This dearly obtained freedom, however, we are not disposed to part with, or to allow him to build up in a new form the ‘beggarly elements’ of scholastic logic which he has thrown down”; Hegelian logic is not “the sole or universal logic, [...] there are other ways in which our ideas may be connected. The triplets of Hegel, the division into being, essence and notion, are not the only or necessary modes in which the world of thought can be conceived.

¹⁹⁷ In April 1845 Jowett came into possession of a copy of the 1840 edition of the first part of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* (*Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Erster Theil: *Die Logik*, ed. by L. von Henning, Berlin, 1840), which is preserved at Balliol College, Jowett Collection, with *marginalia* by Benjamin Jowett. Jowett immediately started the translation, with the collaboration of Frederick Temple; the translation, which is almost complete, was interrupted a couple of years later; the manuscript is preserved at Balliol College, Oxford (Jowett Papers, Group I: A3, D48, H6–11; Group II: G1).

¹⁹⁸ The manuscript material is preserved at Balliol College (Jowett Papers, Group I: A29–35, B2–37, C28–35, C41–45, D43–51, E1–2). On Jowett's role in introducing Hegel, see also Robbins, *British Hegelians*, pp. 29–32, 43–45; Metz, *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, pp. 250–253.

There may be an evolution by degrees as well as by opposites. The word ‘continuity’ suggests the possibility of resolving all differences into differences of quantity. Again, the opposites themselves may vary from the least degree of diversity up to contradictory opposition [...]. The spirit of Hegelian criticism should be applied to his own system”.¹⁹⁹ This also applies to the history of philosophy: “The philosophy of Hegel appeals to a historical criterion: the ideas of men have a succession in time as well as an order of thought. But the assumption that there is a correspondence between the succession of ideas in history and the natural order of philosophy is hardly true even of the beginnings of thought. And in later systems forms of thought are too numerous and complex to admit of our tracing in them a regular succession [...]. Doubtless they [i.e. the philosophical systems] have a relation to one another – the transition from Descartes to Spinoza or from Locke to Berkeley is not a matter of chance, but it can hardly be described as an alternation of opposites or figured to the mind by the vibrations of a pendulum. Even in Aristotle and Plato, rightly understood, we cannot trace this law of action and reaction. They are both idealists, although to the one the idea is actual and immanent, to the other only potential and transcendent, as Hegel himself pointed out”. Let us consider the pre-Socratic philosophies: they are the simplest philosophies, and it is possible to observe “a progress in them; but is there any regular succession?” The Eleatics, for example, “may be regarded as developing in one direction into Megarian school, in the other into the Atomists, but there is no necessary connection between them”.²⁰⁰ Finally, in Hegel’s system “ideas supersede persons. The world of thought, though sometimes described as Spirit or ‘Geist’, is really impersonal. The minds of men are to be regarded as one mind, or more correctly as a succession of ideas. Any comprehensive view of the world must necessarily be general [...]. In all things, if we leave out details, a certain degree of order begins to appear [...]. But are we therefore justified in saying that ideas are the causes of the great movement of the world rather than the personalities which conceived them?”.²⁰¹

Jowett objects to Hegel’s theory of the absolute logical necessity of the historical process, and affirms the role of the individual in historical events. And yet, although “the enthusiasm of his youth” for Hegel had already vanished, in his advanced maturity Jowett still “does not regret the time spent in the study of him. He finds that he has received from him a real enlargement of mind, and much of the true spirit of philosophy, even when he has ceased to believe in him. He returns again and again to his writings as to the recollections of a first love, not undeserving of his admiration still”.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ *The Dialogues of Plato*, translated into English, with Analyses and Introductions, by B. Jowett, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), IV, pp. 326–327.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 329–330.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 334–335.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 336–337.

In October 1886, in a note written for his course on pre-Socratic philosophy, recalling the beginnings of his work as a historian of ancient philosophy, Jowett observes: “Thirty or rather forty years ago, when I began to teach this subject, the works written on it were comparatively few and poor. Zeller’s great history did not exist, nor Brandis, nor Grote’s Plato and Aristotle, nor his account of Socrates in his [H]istory. We had Ritter [...], dry and unimaginative, and some elaborate monographs [and here he cites the works written by Boeckh on Philolaus, by Schaubach on Anaxagoras, by Mullach on Democritus, and by Schleiermacher on Diogenes of Apollonia], G.H. Lewes, written from the point of view of Comte [...]. Above all Hegel’s History of Philosophy, a great light, which has lighted everyone who has studied ancient philosophy [...]. He was not a critic or exactly a scholar; and yet he understood ancient philosophy better than any who had preceded him”.²⁰³

Hegel’s introduction into Great Britain – which started gradually and was not without opposition in the course of the 1850s, progressing rapidly from the middle of the 1860s onwards to gain absolute predominance in all British universities – radically changed the general scene of philosophy in Great Britain. The presence of the history of philosophy in academic curricula was definitively established, and a pressing demand for university textbooks manifested itself. But such manuals were not produced in Great Britain, so the universities had to turn to translations of well-known German works, which were usually updated and enlarged.²⁰⁴ In 1856 there appeared the first English translation of the textbook on the history of philosophy by Friedrich Carl Albert Schwegler, an exponent of the Hegelian school of Tübingen, who was a friend and a collaborator of Zeller; the book was in fact published in New York but also circulated in Great Britain²⁰⁵; a second translation, edited and annotated by the Hegelian James Hutchinson Stirling, who also wrote an extensive

²⁰³ Jowett Papers, Group 1 B 11, 1–3.

²⁰⁴ In the field of the history of philosophy – Stirling acknowledges in the notes he added to his English translation of Schwegler’s manual – “the Germans, indeed, are so exhaustive and complete, whether as regards intelligence or research, that they have left the English absolutely nothing to do but translate their text and copy their erudition into notes” (F.C.A. Schwegler, *Handbook of the History of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1868, p. 346). One of the rare exceptions is represented by John Daniel Morell’s manual (*Manual of History of Philosophy, with numerous examination papers in mental science which have been set in the London University*, London: Stewart, 1884); in addition, Lewes’ manual was published several times (cf. above note 139); Maurice’s volumes were also reprinted without variations (cf. above, note 71).

²⁰⁵ F.C.A. Schwegler, *A History of Philosophy in epitome* [...], transl. by J.H. Seelye, New York: D. Appleton, 1856, 1856²; revised from the 9th German ed., with an Appendix by B.E. Smith, 1880, 1899 (23 reprints between 1856 and 1899; cfr. A Vanzo, ‘Empiricism and Rationalism in Nineteenth-Century Histories of Philosophy’, *Journal for the History of Ideas*, LXXVII, 2016, pp. 267–268).

appendix, appeared in Edinburgh in 1867²⁰⁶; the two editions - the American and the British - enjoyed huge success, until Schwegler's work was replaced (in Britain at least) by Erdmann's manual, which was translated into English in 1890.²⁰⁷ In 1872 Ueberweg's manual was also translated and came out in several other editions.²⁰⁸ As for ancient philosophy, the translation of the volume on Socrates and the Socratics which formed part of Zeller's *Philosophie der Griechen* came out in 1868, while the *Grundriss* was translated in 1885.²⁰⁹ As for modern philosophy, translations were made of Kuno Fischer's volumes on Descartes and Kant (which formed part of his history of modern philosophy) and of Fischer's monograph on Bacon.²¹⁰ The translation of Hegel's *Vorlesungen* on the history of philosophy, on the other hand, was

²⁰⁶ F.C.A. Schwegler, *Handbook of the History of Philosophy*, transl. and annotated by J.H. Stirling, Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1867, 1890s¹⁴ (13 reprints between 1867 and 1899).

²⁰⁷ J.E. Erdmann, *A History of Philosophy*, English translation ed. by W.S. Hough (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1890), 3 vols (other editions: 1891², 1892³, 1897, 1913–1915).

²⁰⁸ F. Ueberweg, *A History of Philosophy, from Thales to the present time*, transl. by G.S. Morris, with additions by N. Porter (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1872–1874), 2 vols (2nd ed. 1875).

²⁰⁹ E. Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, transl. by O. J. Reichel (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1868; 1877²; 1885³); Id., *The Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics*, transl. by O. J. Reichel (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1870; 1880²; 1892³); Id., *Plato and the older Academy*, transl. by S. F. Alleyne and A. Goodwin (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1876; 1888²); Id., *A History of Greek Philosophy, from the earliest period to the time of Socrates*, with a general introduction, transl. by S. F. Alleyne (London: Longmans & Co., 1881); Id., *A History of Eclecticism*, transl. by S. F. Alleyne (London: Longmans & Co., 1883); Id., *Aristotle and the earlier Peripatetics*, transl. by B.F.C. Costelloe and J. H. Muirhead (London: Longmans and Green, 1897); Id., *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, transl. by S. F. Alleyne and E. Abbott (London: Longmans & Green, 1886 [1885]; 1892²; 3rd revised ed. 1896; 1901). Alfred William Benn (1843–1914) owes much to the work of Zeller in his vast reconstruction of Greek thought from the origins to Neoplatonism, which he published in 1882, and which has a final chapter on the ancient tradition in the modern age: *The Greek Philosophers* (London: Kegan, Pauls & Co., 1882), 2 vols; 2nd ed., corrected and partly re-written (London: Smith, Edler & Co., 1914).

²¹⁰ K. Fischer, *Francis Bacon of Verulam. Realistic Philosophy and its Age*, transl. by J. Oxenford (London: Longman, 1857); Id., *A Commentary on Kant's Critick of the Pure Reason*, translated from the *History of Modern Philosophy*, by K.F., with an introduction, explanatory notes, and appendices, by J. P. Mahaffy (London and Dublin: Longmans, Green, 1866); Id., *History of Modern Philosophy. Descartes and his School*, transl. by J.P. Gordy, edited by N. Porter (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1887).

published relatively late, when the season of British idealism was already starting to wane.²¹¹

8.8 Historiographical Production Towards the End of the Century: Spiritualistic Idealism and Darwinism

In practice, British neo-idealism did not lead to much in the field of the general history of philosophy, and was more productive in the field of monographical studies.²¹² From the 1870s onwards, British (and American) neo-idealism was also considerably influenced by the thought of Rudolf Hermann Lotze.²¹³ Lotze's spiritualism finally represented a point of reference for those in the neo-idealistic

²¹¹ G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, transl. by E.S. Haldane [and F.H. Simson] (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1892–1896), 3 vols. But the translation did not arouse much interest; the first volume was reviewed by the historian of ancient philosophy Alfred W. Benn, who observed: “[...] the work made an epoch in the history of philosophy, and probably nothing has since been published on the subject that does not bear traces of its influence. But, owing to this very fact, all that was valuable in Hegel's ideas has been absorbed into subsequent teaching, with the result that he has been far surpassed in this direction by writers more or less closely connected with his own school, such as Schwegler, Erdmann, Zeller, and Kuno Fischer. Although, however, even a Hegelian would hardly go to Hegel for accurate information about the older philosophies, it might have been expected that the master's lectures would be useful as an introduction to the system which professed to sum up in itself all previous systems by interpreting them as successive stages in the evolution of a single comprehensive conception. Unfortunately, such is not the case. Hegel never is obscurer than when he uses the categories of his own logic as a clue to the speculations of his predecessors, while the latter are racked and distorted out of recognition by the treatment to which they are subjected. The uninitiated will find it pleasanter and more profitable to begin their study of the dialectic method with the *Philosophy of History*, the *Aesthetics*, or the *Philosophy of Religion*. It may then be doubted whether the laborious task of translating the lectures into English was worth undertaking at all. None but persons who want to go rather deeply into the literature of the history of philosophy or into Hegel's own philosophy will care to open them, and on neither of these studies should one who is not a German scholar attempt to embark” (*Academy*, Dec. 23, no. 1127, 1893, p. 559). In the same period the English translation of the *Vorlesungen* on the philosophy of religion was published (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, together with a work on the proofs of the existence of God*, transl. by E.B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson, London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., 1895).

²¹² Cf. the important and popular works by E. Caird on Kant and Hegel (*A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant*, Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1877; *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1889, 2 vols; 1909²; *Hegel*, Edinburgh and London: Blackwood & Sons, 1883; 1886; 1891; 1903; 1907), by R. Adamson on Kant and Fichte (*On the Philosophy of Kant*, Edinburgh: Douglas, 1879, translated into German in Leipzig in 1880; *Fichte*, Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1881; 1893; 1901; 1908), and by H. Jones on Lotze (*A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Lotze*, Glasgow: J. Maclehose, 1895).

²¹³ On Lotze's influence on Anglo-American philosophy, cf. P. Devaux, *Lotze et son influence sur la philosophie anglo-saxonne* (Brussels, 1932), pp. 23–48, and P. Grimley Kuntz, *Introduction to G. Santayana, Lotze's System of Philosophy* (Bloomington and London, 1971), pp. 48–68. Many of the young representatives of early British idealism had attended Lotze's lessons in Göttingen; from its very first issue, the magazine *Mind*, founded in 1876 and for some decades the organ of British spiritualistic idealism, published numerous articles and reviews on Lotze; between 1880 and 1885, Lotze's major works – the *System* and the *Mikrokosmos* – were translated into English thanks to outstanding exponents of Oxonian idealism, such as T.H. Green and B. Bosanquet.

movement who contested the immanentistic outcomes of thinkers such as Francis Herbert Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet, or the excessively rigid Hegelian orthodoxy of Edward Caird and Henry Jones. The ‘Lotzeans’, or ‘neo-Lotzeans’ – as they were called in the controversy which set them against the ‘neo-Hegelians’ – became supporters of a return to more genuinely Kantian positions but especially to forms of personalistic spiritualism which in truth had always been present in British idealism, and which combined better with certain aspects of the British philosophical tradition, such as the theism of the Scottish school and Coleridge’s Platonising idealism.²¹⁴ The ‘Lotzeans’ included some ‘general’ historians of philosophy, such as Robert Adamson, William Ritchie Sorley, and John Theodore Merz. By reworking the material he had used for his lessons, Adamson wrote a history of Greek philosophy and a history of modern philosophy which were published posthumously by Sorley, who was in turn the author of a history of English philosophy; as for Merz, a German who was naturalized in Britain, he wrote an interesting history of nineteenth-century scientific thought.²¹⁵

In the field of the historiography of philosophy, the tradition of utilitarian empiricism also produced little. The first important contribution were made by the works of George Grote, even though he did not write a general history of philosophy. A pupil of James Mill, Grote was radical on a political level and utilitarian in philosophy; between 1846 and 1856 he published a history of Greece in 12 volumes which revolutionised studies in this field. As for the history of philosophy, worthy of note is the section devoted to sophistry and Socrates in democratic Athens, where the sophists are rehabilitated as an expression of Athenian democracy.²¹⁶ In 1865 Grote

²¹⁴The debate started with the publication by Andrew Seth Pringle Pattison, of the miscellaneous volume *Hegelianism and Personality* (London, 1887; 1893); cf. Metz, *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, pp. 380–398, who speaks of “personal Idealists”; E.Th. Long, ‘The Gifford Lectures and the Scottish Personal Idealists’, *Review of Metaphysics*, XLIX, no. 2, Dec. 1995, pp. 365–395; W.J. Mander, ‘Life and Finite Individuality: the Bosanquet/Pringle-Pattison Debate’, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, XIII, no. 1 (2005), pp. 111–130

²¹⁵R. Adamson, *Roger Bacon: the Philosophy of Science in the XIII Century* (Manchester: J.E. Cornish, 1876); Id., *The Development of Modern Philosophy* (Edinburgh & London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1903), 2 vols; Id., *The Development of Greek Philosophy* (*ibid.*, 1908); Id., *A Short History of Logic* (*ibid.*, 1911) [the work gathers together the items published in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, whose philosophical section was directed by Adamson]; W.R. Sorley, *A History of English Philosophy* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1920); J.T. Merz, *A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh & London: W. Blackwood, 1896–1914), 4 vols; reprinted, with a new introduction by G. Micheli (Bristol, 1999); see also Micheli, ‘Merz, John Theodor’, in *DNCBPh*, pp. 782–786.

²¹⁶G. Grote, *History of Greece* (London: John Murray, 1846–1856), 12 vols; published several times; translated into French 1864–1867, into Italian 1855–1858, into German 1850–1855. Cf. A. Momigliano, *George Grote and the Study of Greek History* (London, 1952); L. Catana, ‘Grote’s analysis of Ancient Greek political thought: its significance to J.S. Mill’s idea about ‘active character’ in a liberal democracy’, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, XXVIII, no. 3 (2020), pp. 553–572.

also published an extensive work on Plato in three volumes.²¹⁷ Here too he introduced profound innovation into the previous tradition, which interpreted Platonic thought in an exclusively moral and religious perspective. Grote contested the traditional interpretation of Platonism as a completed system, believing that the importance of Plato in the history of thought lay in the aporetic dialogues, not in his doctrine of transcendent ideas nor even in his authoritarian political thought. Grote intended to continue his research with an extensive monographic study on Aristotle, but the work was left unfinished: the two posthumous volumes illustrate Aristotle's life and the content of his logical works.²¹⁸ Grote's work deeply influenced early twentieth-century Platonic studies, in particular those of Alfred Eduard Taylor, and also anticipated Popper's criticism of an 'authoritarian' Plato.

The utilitarian empiricist tradition was also connected with the successful history of ethics by Henry Sidgwick, where the critical aspects are predominant,²¹⁹ and in particular with the vast historiographical production of Leslie Stephen.²²⁰ Born into a family of the evangelical tradition, Stephen soon embraced radical positions on a political level and definitely agnostic views on a religious plane, abandoning a safe academic career at Cambridge to devote himself to an intense activity as a historian, biographer, and polyhedric writer. He was mainly a historian of ideas, and in his two major works – the *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* and the continuation of this work in three volumes entitled *The English Utilitarians*, on the figures of Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, and John Stuart Mill, respectively – he constantly strove to connect philosophical, religious or scientific ideas to the social environment, and his conception of history was perhaps even more influenced by the naturalism of Darwinian origin than by the tradition of utilitarianism. Historians of philosophy, he observes, are naturally interested in great thinkers and “tell us how the torch was passed from hand to hand – from Descartes to Locke, from Locke to Hume, and from Hume to Kant”; it may thus appear that the progress of philosophy is “determined by logical considerations. Each philosopher discovers some of the errors of his predecessor, and advances to some closer approximation to the truth [...]. But, when we look beyond the narrow circle of illustrious philosophers, we are

²¹⁷ G. Grote, *Plato and the other Companions of Sokrates* (London: John Murray, 1865; 1867; 1875; 1885; 1888), 3 vols; on Grote's interpretation of Plato K.N. Demetriou, *George Grote on Plato and Athenian Democracy. A Study in Classical Reception* (Frankfurt a. M., 1999); Id., 'Grote', in *DNCBPh*, pp. 460–464.

²¹⁸ G. Grote, *Aristotle*, 2 vols (London: Murray, 1872; 1880²; 1883³).

²¹⁹ H. Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics for English Readers* (London & New York: Macmillan, 1886; 1892³; 1896⁴; 1906⁵; 1919, based on an article contributed to the 9th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

²²⁰ L. Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1876, [repr. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1876]; 1881²; 1902³; Id., *The English Utilitarians*, 3 vols. (London: Duckworth, 1900). On Stephen's historiographical work, cf. von Arx, *Progress and Pessimism: Religion, Politics, and History in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), pp. 11–64; J. Bicknell, 'Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*: A Tract for the Time', *Victorian Studies*, VI (1962), pp. 103–120; Id., 'Stephen, Leslie' in *DNCBPh*, pp. 1065–1072.

impressed with the conviction that other causes are at work besides those which are obvious to the logician. Doctrines vanish without a direct assault; they change in sympathy with a change in apparently remote department of inquiry; superstitions, apparently suppressed, break out anew in slightly modified shapes; and we discover that a phase of thought, which we had imagined to involve a new departure, is but a superficial modification of an old order of ideas".²²¹ Ideas and beliefs must have a direct connection with the "material wants of mankind"; otherwise, logic alone will not save them.²²² There is a close correlation between the ideas and beliefs of a society and its political and social organisation: if the beliefs change, the social order vacillates or disappears, but the reverse is also true: the social development reacts upon the beliefs, and "when a natural organ becomes unfitted for its task – when, for example, the rule of a king or a priesthood becomes intolerable, the religion which sanctions their authority will itself be questioned"; if we examine more closely the developments in the domain of thought, "we shall be convinced that the immediate causes of change are to be sought rather in the social development than in the activity of a few speculative minds. A complete history of thought would therefore have to take into account the social influences, as well as the logical bearing, of the varying phases of opinion".²²³

Stephen is the last great historian of thought of the Victorian age. The cultural climate quickly changed in Great Britain in the late nineteenth century, and the great season of idealism came to an end; Lotze's influence rapidly decreased, but the other lines of thought present in the British tradition of the nineteenth-century were also on the wane. As for the historiography of philosophy, the approaching season was characterised by the appearance of specialist contributions, which, as regards England, pertained principally to the field of ancient philosophy.

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²²¹ Stephen, *History of English Thought* [1881²], I, p. 3.

²²² *Ibid.*, I, p. 10.

²²³ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 12–13.

²²⁴ As for the reviews, the name of the author, if known, is given in square brackets.

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List of the Journals of the Period Quoted

Academy - *The Academy* (London, 1869–1916)

American Catholic - *The American Catholic Quarterly Review* (Philadelphia, 1876–1920)

American Eclectic - *The American Eclectic: or Selections from Periodical Literature of all Foreign Countries* (New York, 1841–1842)

American Presbyterian - *The American Presbyterian Review* (New York, 1869–1871)

American Quarterly - *American Quarterly Review* (Philadelphia, 1827–1837)

American Theological Review - *The American theological review* (New York and Boston, 1859–1862)

Analytical Review - *The Analytical Review, or history of literature domestic and foreign, on an enlarged plan* (London, 1788–1798)

Andover Review - *The Andover Review: a Religious and Theological Monthly* (Boston, 1884–1893)

Anti-Jacobin Review - *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* (London, 1798–1819)

Anti-Jacobin Weekly - *The Anti-Jacobin: or, Weekly Examiner* (London, 1797–1798)

- Athenaeum - The Athenaeum* (London, 1828–1921)
- Blackwood's Magazine - Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (Edinburgh, 1817–1902)
- Boston Quarterly - The Boston Quarterly Review* (Boston, 1838–1842)
- British and foreign Review - The British and foreign Review; or European quarterly Journal* (London 1835–1844)]
- British Critic - The British Critic, and quarterly theological Review* (London, 1793–1843)
- British Quarterly - The British Quarterly Review* (London, 1845–1886)
- Champion - Drakard's Paper* [from Jan. 10, to Dec. 26, 1813, no 1–51]; then *The Champion: a London weekly Journal* [from Jan. 2, 1814, to Jun., 2, 1822, no. 52–491] (London, 1813–1822)
- Christian Examiner - The Christian Examiner* (Boston, 1824–1870)
- Christian Remembrancer - The Christian Remembrancer. A quarterly Review* (London, 1819–1868)
- Christian Review - The Christian Review* (Boston, 1836–1863)
- Christian Spectator - The Quarterly Christian Spectator* (New Haven, 1829–1838)
- Christian Union - The Christian Union* (New York, 1870–1893)
- Church of England Review - The Church of England Quarterly Review* (London, 1837–1858)
- Church Review - The [American Quarterly] Church Review [and Ecclesiastical Register]* (New Haven, 1848–1891)
- Classical Museum - The Classical museum: a journal of philology, and of ancient history and literature* (London, 1844–1850)
- Contemporary Review - The Contemporary Review* (London, 1866–)
- Critic - The Critic* (London, 1843–1863)
- Critic [New York] - The Critic: a weekly Review of literature and the Arts* (New York, 1881–1898)
- Critical Review [London] - The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature* (London 1755–1817)
- Critical Review [Edinburgh] - The Critical Review of Theological and Philosophical Literature* (Edinburgh, 1891–)
- Dial - The Dial. A monthly journal of current Literature* (Chicago, 1880–1929)
- Dublin Review - The Dublin Review* (London, 1836–1968)
- Dublin University Magazine - The Dublin University Magazine, a literary and philosophical review* (Dublin, 1833–1880)
- Eclectic Magazine - The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign literature, Science, and Art* (New York, 1844–1898)
- Eclectic Review - The Eclectic Review* (London, 1805–1868)
- Edinburgh Magazine - The Edinburgh Magazine, and literary miscellany* (Edinburgh, 1804–1826)
- Edinburgh Review - The Edinburgh Review, or critical journal* (Edinburgh, 1802–1929]
- Educational Review - Educational Review* (New York, 1891–1928)
- Ethics - International Journal of Ethics, devoted to advancement of ethical knowledge and practice* (Philadelphia, Chicago, 1890–1938)

- Examiner - The Examiner [and London Review]* (London, 1808–1881)
- Foreign Quarterly - The Foreign Quarterly Review* (London 1827–1847)
- Fortnightly Review - The Fortnightly Review* (London 1865–1921)
- Fraser's Magazine - Fraser's Magazine for town and country* (London, 1830–1882)
- Independent - The Independent. Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts* (New York, 1848–1921)
- Journal of classical Philology - The Journal of classical and sacred Philology* (Cambridge, 1854-)
- Journal of Speculative Philosophy - The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (St. Louis, 1867-)
- Leader - The Leader [and Saturday analyst]* (London, 1850–1860)
- Literary Chronicle - The Literary Chronicle, and Weekly Review* (London, 1819–1828)
- Literary Gazette - The Literary Gazette; and a Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences* (London, 1817–1862)
- Literary Gazette (Philadelphia) - The Literary Gazette; or, Journal of Criticism, Science, and the Arts* (Philadelphia, 1821)
- London and Westminster Review* see *Westminster Review*
- London Quarterly - The London Quarterly Review [London review Apr. 1858-Jul. 1862]* (London, 1853–1932)
- London Review - The London review of politics, society, literature, art, and science* (London, 1860–1869)
- Massachusetts Quarterly - The Massachusetts Quarterly Review* (Boston, 1847–1850)
- Mercersburg Review - The Mercersburg [quarterly] Review [an Organon for Christological, historical and positive Theology]* (Lancaster, Philadelphia, 1849–1872)
- Methodist Quarterly - The Methodist Quarterly Review* (New York, 1841–1884)
- Mind - Mind: a quarterly review of Psychology and Philosophy* (London, 1876-)
- Monthly Magazine - The Monthly Magazine, or, British Register* (London, 1796–1843)
- Monthly Register - The Monthly Register and encyclopedian Magazine*, London, 1802–1803]
- Monthly Repository - The Monthly Repository, and review of theology and general literature* (London. 1806–1838)
- Monthly Review - The Monthly Review, [or, literary journal (until 1825)]* (London, 1749–1844)
- Museum Foreign Literature - The Museum of Foreign Literature, Science and Art* (Philadelphia, 1822–1832)
- New Englander - The New Englander [and Yale Review]* (New Haven, 1843–1892)
- New London Review - The New London Review; or, monthly report of authors and books* (London, 1799–1800)
- New Monthly Magazine - The New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register* (London, 1814–1894)

- New World - The New World* (Boston and New York, 1892–1900)
- North American Magazine - The North American [Quarterly] Magazine* (Philadelphia, 1833–1838)
- North American Review - The North American Review* (Boston, 1821–1939)
- North British - The North British Review* (Edinburgh 1844–1871)
- Philosophical Review - The Philosophical Review* (Boston, 1892–)
- Phrenological Journal - The Phrenological Journal, and Magazine of Moral Science* (London, [Edinburgh] 1823–1847)
- Presbyterian Review - The Presbyterian [and Reformed] Review* (New York, 1880–1902)
- Prospective Review - The Prospective Review; a quarterly journal of theology and literature* (London, 1845–1855)
- Quarterly Review - The Quarterly Review* (London, 1809–1905)
- Rambler - The Rambler; a Catholic Journal and Review* [from Jul. 1862, *The Home and foreign review*] (London, 1848–1864)
- Reader - The Reader; a review of literature, science, and art* (London, 1863–1867)
- Russell's Magazine - Russell's Magazine* (Charleston, 1857–1860)
- Saturday Review - The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* (London, 1855–1938)
- Schribner's Monthly - Scribner's Monthly. An illustrated magazine for the people* (New York, 1870–1881)
- Scottish Review - The Scottish Review* (Edinburgh, 1882–1920)
- Scots Magazine - The Scots Magazine* (Edinburgh, 1739–1803)
- Southern Messenger - The Southern Literary Messenger; devoted to every department of Literature, and fine arts* (Richmond, 1848–1864)
- Southern Review - The Southern Review* (Baltimore, 1867–1879)
- Speaker - The Speaker: the liberal review* (London, 1890–1907)
- Spectator - The Spectator* (London, 1828–)
- Universalist - The Universalist Quarterly and General Review* (Boston, 1844–1891)
- Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine - The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* (London, 1778–1900)
- Westminster Review - The Westminster Review* (London, 1824–1914) [*Westminster Review* from Jan. 1824 to Jan. 1836; *London and Westminster Review* from Apr. 1836 to Mar. 1840; *Westminster Review* from Jun. 1840 to Jun. 1846; *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly* from Oct. 1846 to Oct. 1851]

Index of Names

Note: The names of authors of general histories of philosophy or comparable works, are in *italics*. The numbers in *italics* refer to the pages on which authors are specifically examined. The first name, or names, of authors of contemporary literature are abbreviated to the initial letter, or letters.

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